June 1966

R. S.
The Discipline of Discussion

V. V. RAMANA MURTI
The Quest for World-Government: Dante's "De Monarchia"

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Rationalism Re-examined

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Reflections on a Dark Mystery

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VOLUME XXXVII - NO. 6

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THE ARYAN PATH

Point out the "Way" — however dimly, and lost among the host — as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness.

— The Voice of the Silence

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The Discipline of Discussion

. . . enlightening one another and constantly speaking of me, they are full of enjoyment and satisfaction. (*Gītā,* Ch. x)

AN OLD SANSKRIT SAYING says: *"Vāde vāde jāyate tattvabodhaḥ"* (By discussion is gained illumination as to principles). Sir Francis Bacon's "ready man" was apt to "conference." Shakespeare often adds "sweet" when he speaks of "discourse." But a different evaluation of discussion is also indicated: from one side, by the practical mind, in such faintly condemnatory phrases as "merely academic" and "deeds, not words"; and, from the other side, by Mystics, who see in it, as the Upaniṣad says, a mere wearying of speech — *"Vāco viglāpanam hi tad."*

What prompts people to discuss a question or an idea? The motivation may be seen at its simplest in such proverbial sayings as "Two heads are better than one" or the Indian saying current in our countryside to this day which says, "Out of the mouths of five God speaks." Behind these general attitudes lies a sense of the probable imperfection of any individual human mind. Any man, it is felt, is the better for assistance in his thinking. The limitations may be grouped under imperfect information, i.e. incomplete or inaccurate command of the facts involved, and imperfect reasoning, i.e. either formal errors in logic or, what are more likely, errors of judgement in evaluating the relative importance of different factors in a problem or their interaction among themselves.

Universal instinct seems to treat discussion as a means of finding a way through these limitations of the human mind. There is the hope that by putting our heads together we can approximate to something like reasonably full information on the questions we discuss. There is the hope also that by the interplay of minds a more just estimation of the interplay of the various factors in a problem will be arrived at. Discussion seems to be regarded as a means of circumventing mortal

imperfection of the intellect — a social equivalent for those disciplines by which individuals hope to remove the imperfections of their thought. In addition there is the hope that as a result of the discussion each individual mind will itself to a certain extent rise above its own limitations. Behind the whole social habit of discussion there is an implied quest of complete, correct appreciation of truth to be made available to each participant in the degree that he will take of the fruit of discussion and eat.

All participants in a discussion are acting, according to this account, as if they believed that the truth they seek to attain exists in its own right. It is a truth which we may attain or fail to attain, but it exists as something to be discovered. It is not a truth to be made or constructed. The implied attitude is the one beautifully expressed in one of Abelard's hymns for Lauds in which he says that truth is in the thing itself, not in the schemata we make:

In re est veritas
Non jam in schemate

Discussion implies a faith in a truth towards which human minds can approach by every possible self-correction and mutual adjustment.

This is an important presupposition; for it holds up as the basis of all discussion a definite metaphysical position of some importance. It seems to rule out, for instance, any form of solipsism. It has been argued with some force that, strictly, there is no evidence that any one of us can have except for the contents of his own consciousness. The presence of other beings and the rest of the world is an inference which has been questioned, nor is it easy wholly to refute this point of view; but discussion seems to proceed by complete denial of it as a presupposition. Unless there is a common world to which our experience can be directed there is nothing to discuss. If each consciousness is totally islanded within itself, the categories of true and false have no interpersonal meaning.

Even more: discussion and the hope of arriving at an agreed complete truth must put out of court any view of human thinking which completely explains it from natural causes. This is a point of some importance and we need to dwell on it. In discussion we try continually to refer to a truth independent of any individual mind and, therefore, binding upon every mind that sees it to be a truth. If what any participant says can be explained wholly with reference to causes other than this, precisely in that degree it loses this quality of being binding. Professor Haldane, for instance, said:

> If my mental processes are determined only by the means of atoms in

> my brain, I have no reason to suppose that my beliefs are true . . . and hence I have no reason for supposing my brain to be composed of atoms.

We must, that is to say, distinguish between an explanation of a thought with reference to its psychological causation and its elucidation with reference to the grounds for supposing it to be true. If we have any reason to suppose that a thought is determined wholly by a psychological causation personal to the thinker, it at once sets up a presumption that the thought may not be true — not, of course, that it *is* false; for it may be true by coincidence. That is why the phrase "wishful thinking" is so impregnated with a rejection of validity. That is why any suspicion of ulterior motive or emotional prejudice casts a doubt upon the conclusions advanced. And yet in psychological terms every thought is explicable causally. What we need, then, to make discussion valid is a causation that is identical with the ground-and-consequent relationship. A thought commands our assent only to the degree to which this holds good. We demand, that is to say, that a conclusion advanced should be seen to be prompted by nothing except admitted truth.

This is a metaphysical position of great importance also. Just as earlier we arrived at a truth independent of the individual, we now arrive at a faculty of perception within the individual independent of his peculiar nature and circumstances. This is a startling implication, but there is no escape from it. We cannot at this time of day deny that human thought is actually profoundly influenced by all manner of factors that do not form grounds for supposing a thought true. We have sciences that explain the influence of environment upon the growing mind in some detail. We have the schools of modern psychology which show how much more serious and effective than common sense would suppose is the influence exerted by our emotional nature on our thinking. The results of these sciences are not to be gainsaid. Only, if their results are the *whole* truth about the human mind, then once again there is nothing to discuss — but the exponents of these sciences themselves continue to behave as though discussion were possible. They produce their evidence and demand of us as of right an assent to their conclusions. We are not bound to give any such assent unless we suppose that (*a*) the process by which these students arrive at their conclusions is not simply the outcome of their environment and individual psychic constitutions; and (*b*) that there is in us the possibility of a mental process which is not simply the product of our environment and individual psychic constitution. In short, it may be that what these determinists of various kinds say is true; but if so we have no way of verifying this truth and in fact we are unable to attach any interpersonal meaning to the word "truth." At least a residue in intellectual process is necessary which is determined by

nothing except a universal, impersonal truth. An insight into the reality is logically necessary in order to deny validly that such insight can exist. This is so important that I should like to recommend the word "supernatural" for this aspect of the human capacity to know. The word was used by the late Professor C. S. Lewis in this context to indicate that there must be a faculty of perception and insight which bears some unique relation to the universal truth and is exempt from all other causation.

It is interesting to compare a conclusion that Professor C. V. Broad arrived at by a completely different route. In an address to the Society for Psychical Research he discussed the problems raised by telepathy and by precognition and prevision. After discussing various alternatives he concluded that it was probably necessary to postulate the existence of an aspect of the mind, a psychic factor, within a psychic medium which is independent of the body and all the spatial and temporal conditions of bodily life. One branch of science at least seems to declare empirically probable that which discussion requires logically for its validity.

At this point I am reminded of the hero of one of Charles Williams's novels. He says to a friend:

> . . . for all I know you are right. Only if you are there is nothing for us to discuss. And I do not say there is, I insist on behaving as if there was, because I will not believe in a world where you and I cannot talk."

The validity of discussion logically requires that the undetermined insight of various participants should be in harmony. All disagreement is simply a symptom that mental activity is being determined by other things than reality in at least one and possibly both or all participants. We come up here against the parallel categories of Being and Knowing. For discussion to be possible we need Being which is one, universal, and independent; and Knowing which can be not only undetermined by anything except that Being but also, therefore, identically determined in each knower by that Being. In short, there must be laws of thought that all participants in a discussion are bound by and there must be a pre-existent harmony between the laws of thought and the laws of things.

But do what logic calls the laws of thought represent the laws of things? The principle of non-contradiction and the principle of the excluded middle, for instance, presuppose a reality composed of specific and separate entities. When mystics assert that they have direct experience of a principle of Reality which is not specific and not of the nature of a separate entity, are we justified in applying these laws of thought and rejecting their evidence? The necessity of these two postulates is not in question so long as we are dealing with specific and separate entities. But have we any ground for rejecting out of hand the possibility of real Being that is not of this nature?

This brings us to an essential step in discussion: the establishment of commonly agreed starting points for inference. As between the scientists discussing an empirical conclusion, the common ground is fairly clearly defined by their tradition and discipline. They accept data of a certain kind and offer evidence conformable to certain functions of quantitative measurement. As between two men discussing moral problems the common ground is not of such a given nature; and as between scientists and mystics there is a whole gulf as to the very nature of evidence.

Must discussion be confined to groups subscribing to the same theory of evidence? It would seem to be so and this may be one reason why total world views are so rarely convincing.

A further study of discussion would then lie along the lines of a parallel understanding of Being and Knowing. How are we going to bridge the gap between impersonal truth and an imperfect human intelligence? We must recall the old aphorism: Knowledge is a function of Being. It is because the reasoner is the particular kind of limited being he is, that his knowing is the particular kind of limited knowing it is. The rules of evidence attempt to lift the reasoner out of his particularity into an untroubled perception of Being. A discussion, in fact, is therefore unsuccessful in proportion as the participants break a discipline of submission to whatever is the nature of the evidence they are dealing with; that is to say, the discipline is not only intellectual but psychological and moral. A finite knower is striving to lay aside those aspects of his particularity which would interfere with what we have referred to as the supernatural capacity of knowing.

Realizing that the reasoner's is a psychological and moral as well as an intellectual discipline reminds one of a special extension of discussion in the Indian tradition. This is the relation between *Guru* and *chela*. Here the rules of evidence are accepted in the sense that a true *Guru* does not demand blind obedience at any point, but they are progressively expanded in the sense that the disciple is taught by practices of meditation to expand his Being in such a way that the Knowing which is a function of it comprehends more and more of the area of the *Guru*'s experience. In this way discussion is transformed into the different process of osmosis and the communication of perceived truth made as complete as the disciple's nature will allow. The functions of discussion are superlatively expanded by a spiritual discipline that aims at the fusion of the Knower and the Known, in which is perfect certainty.*

R. S.

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* Condensed from a paper read before the Bombay Philosophical Society last year.

V. V. RAMANA MURTI

The Quest for World-Government: Dante's "De Monarchia"

[We are glad to welcome to our pages Shri V. V. Ramana Murti, M.A., M.LITT., at present Reader in Political Science at the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, where his special field of teaching is Political Philosophy. At Madras University he did research on Gandhian non-violence, publishing later a book on *Non-Violence in Politics* (1958). During 1964-5 he was at Stanford University, California, as a visiting scholar working on a project on Arms Control and Disarmament, having already published a book on *Commonsense about Defence* (1959). He continues to publish articles, papers, and reviews in several journals and is also working on a few books, but his special interest remains Gandhian philosophy.

His article is a tribute to the subtle insight shown in Dante's *De Monarchia*. While Dante's actual writing shows the influence of the times he lived and worked in, there is also a far-reaching vision of what mankind ultimately requires if its ageless quest for the good life is not to be wrecked by the intransigencies of heady nationalisms.—ED.]

THE SEVEN-HUNDREDTH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF DANTE in 1965 coincided with the International Co-operation Year all over the world. The supreme political message of Dante was never more appropriate than at the present juncture. Dante was not only the immortal author of *The Divine Comedy*. He was also the passionate political theorist of the Middle Ages in his *De Monarchia*. It will be in the fitness of things if we renew the relevance of its perennial theme to the contemporary crisis in the political life of humanity. In *De Monarchia,* Dante continued the time-honoured custom of a close and effective association between political theory and political action. He anticipates the later tradition of a man of letters communicating with the political debate, which is continuously exemplified in creative artists like Milton and Goethe.

The oft-repeated remark that the Middle Ages were essentially unpolitical in character is only a half-truth. The fate of Dante's life sufficiently disproves it beyond any doubt. Born in 1265 in Florence in Italy, he was, to use a unique expression of his, a "Florentine by birth but not in character." This will epitomize Dante's tragedy. After enjoying the best possible circumstances as a youth, he participated twice in military campaigns. At the age of thirty, he was already immersed in the municipal politics of Florence. In 1300, he became a member of the famous Council of Six that possessed the highest administrative authority. Dante was subsequently appointed ambassador to the neighbouring town of San Gimignano on an important mission. His diplomatic career was cut short

owing to the vicissitudes of political strife. It was the principal malady that characterized the secular life of those times. The fatal dissension between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines affected the fortunes of Dante, who was affiliated to the Ghibellines. He was banished from his city, and his remaining years were spent in exile.

The ordeal of an exile's life was also the consequence of an equally portentous struggle between the "two swords" that permeated the Middle Ages. The Emperor and the Pope spared no occasion to press their respective claims on Christendom. The uneasy situation in Florence was overlooked by neither of them. When the contending parties were divided over Florentine territory, and fierce violence broke out in the city, Dante's thoughts were singularly turned towards reconciliation and peace. It was during Dante's absence from Florence, when he was sent to Pope Boniface, that the final crisis took place in his city. The subsequent developments indicated that Dante was no longer safe in Florence. The rival factions got all power. Suits were brought against Dante in his absence, charging him of grave political offences. His property was confiscated. In 1302, Dante was condemned to death by fire if he should ever be caught in Florentine territory. While his family remained in Florence, he himself became a wanderer and dependent. The companion of exile, loneliness, haunted him wherever he travelled. He could not make terms even with his fellow exiles. Dante's uncompromising independence and his unwavering allegiance to the ultimate values made him stand alone in the world. He was one of the courageous examples of what Romain Rolland would call "free-spirits" of all nations, "who would suffer, fight, and prevail."

De Monarchia was composed by Dante during this period of exile. The work fully reflects the conditions of the age. The stamp of Dante's personality is no less evident. His pathetic despair over the prevalent disorder and anguished cry for a global order are writ large on every page. It was probably written during 1309-13, though some scholars would assign an earlier date to its composition. Dante upheld, with the natural vigour of a prophet, the inescapable need for a world authority as the only suitable remedy for the deep malady of the body-politic of Europe. He also challenged the self-aggrandizing claims of the Papal power, which he considered solely instrumental to the political problems of Italy. *De Monarchia* was anti-Papal even to the extent of justifying the Roman Emperor. This political testament aroused fierce controversy and opposition from Papal circles. The Pope feared the extensive influence of *De Monarchia*. In 1329, eight years after Dante's death (in 1321), the Pope had *De Monarchia* burnt as a heretical work in the market-place at Bologna. It was recorded that some supporters of the Pope even proposed to dig up Dante's bones and burn them. The profound protest it evoked

from the sources of ecclesiastical authority was symbolic of the enormous influence *De Monarchia* exercised. Similar outbursts and indignation were voiced in Europe in 1762 when Rousseau preached the Gospel of Nature in his powerful works, *Social Contract* and *Emile.*

Dante's *De Monarchia* contains the central argument of the poet on the basic political question of his times. But it would be an error of judgement to regard it as the complete and final statement of his political theory. *De Monarchia* represents the most significant stage in the development of Dante's political concepts; but it is neither the first nor the final stage. A historical perspective will emerge only when we insist on a parallel study of Dante's Political Letters, which perhaps preceded *De Monarchia,* his *Convivio,* and the suggestive symbolism of the *Divine Comedy.* An examination of the political experiences of Dante from 1313 to 1321 is equally pertinent. It is of very crucial importance that his political message, like the *Republic* of Plato, was resolutely pursued by the wandering poet and the convinced philosopher to the very end of his life. He never gave up faith in his political doctrine, which he continued to cherish and propagate till the end. He was joined by his two sons and a daughter at the time of his death in 1321. His wife remained in the beloved city of his birth, Florence, which he was not able to visit from 1302 onwards. This tragic end was a natural climax to Dante's political career, and a true vindication of his great faith in the political principles that sustained him all through his troubled life.

In reviewing the political doctrines of *De Monarchia,* we may demarcate what is necessarily local and temporal from what is universal and timeless in the book. Dante's belief in the righteousness of the temporal powers was the outcome of his intense disgust with the Papal supremacy. From a secular viewpoint, he considered it a source of unmitigated evil. Dante's prophetic advocacy of the secular powers at "the summit of the Medieval phase," in Sorokin's phrase, reveals his rare insight into the workings of historical development. By his argument for the independence of the Emperor from the Pope, Dante announces the dawn of the Renaissance.

While Dante's scholastic strictures on the Papal supremacy might be taken as largely negative, his readiness to extol the Holy Roman Empire could be regarded as less positive. Bryce coined the phrase that the *De Monarchia* was the epitaph of the Holy Roman Empire. But it was no more than a concession to historicity on Dante's part. It was the historical counterpart of the Roman Emperor that attracted his imagination. *De Monarchia* can as well be taken, as Gentile argues, as the inaugural "rebellion against Scholastic transcendence."

It would be wanton exaggeration to read Dante's absolute defence of

monarchy literally. His prescription that universal monarchy alone would be able to unite a divided mankind under the auspices of a single universal authority was tendered at a time when monarchy was the commonly acceptable and the only accessible form of secular government. And, writing for an audience where scholasticism was the unavoidable medium in vogue, Dante could not help citing instances of historical evidence in support of his view. If *De Monarchia* is only a glorious dream of Dante's, it is only just to remember that it is a dream of an actual thing that was once in existence. No thinker can disregard the limitations of his age, and Dante is not an exception to this. Any criticism of a political thinker must necessarily meet the requisite "historical sense," without which it cannot be valid.

Dante's ideas on Monarchy and the Papacy may be viewed as severely conditioned by the demands of the times in which he lived, and are, therefore, peculiar to him. But Dante comes nearer to our climate when he propounds the two aspects of his theme on world-government. First, he seeks to establish the imperative necessity of a world authority, ruling entire humanity as one unit. Secondly, Dante argues that the most essential characteristic of such a world-government is the pursuit of universal peace. Both these principles have an unmistakable bearing on the contemporary situation in international affairs. Nothing is more timely than the utter need of a world government, the advantages of which are now indisputable.

One of the unresolved points in this debate is the question whether world government must precede world peace, or world peace come prior to world government. Advocates of each viewpoint tend to assess our problems in its partial perspective and, consequently, conclude that one alone can come first in an order of priority. Dante's comprehensive vision superseded the narrow limits of this approach. He seems to insist that both these pursuits are parts of an integral process. In Dante's view, the prime objective of a world government would be world peace, and world peace would not be established without a world government. Dante considered the two goals to be co-equal, and examines their inherent correlation rather than their interdependence in his work. In Dante's words, "the proper work of mankind taken as a whole is to exercise continually its entire capacity," and it "is most free and easy to carry on its work when it enjoys the quiet and tranquillity of peace." Dante achieves this union between the two concepts; for he holds that "human society is a totality in relation to its parts, but is itself a part of another totality." Dante's theory of the unity of the world, as Ernest Barker suggests, is Platonic in its origin.

Dante makes use of his Aristotelian learning and Thomistic sources to

prove the continuity of the social organization, which is, in his case, the age-old Empire. But he employs the Aristotelian citations for the establishment presumably of the non-Aristotelian concept. Likewise, he utilizes the Thomistic argument to support an obviously anti-Thomistic cult. There is an element of Averroism in Dante. It anticipates Marsillo of Padua, whose Averroist Aristotelianism has made him proverbial. Dante's uniqueness is that the ultimate end of all his scholasticism has been the promotion of world peace and its institutional ally, world government.

De Monarchia was as much a pioneering classic in defence of peace in 1313 as Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace* was a vigorous case of the same in 1795. It has been contended by a notable scholar, Professor George Catlin, that Dante unwittingly wrote in his *De Monarchia* an inspiring Prologue for the League of Nations. In the light of this view, it can be further maintained that Dante's meaningful work is no less of a universal prologue for the present United Nations. Its lofty idealism and the intense fervour of its principles only render the case for world government and the unification of mankind irrefutable and urgent at the present juncture. The legacy of Dante is undeniable in the political theories of our age.

Gandhiji was asked at the Asian Relations Conference in 1947 in New Delhi whether he believed in One World. His reply was that he would "not like to live in this world if it is not to be one." He firmly believed in the possibilities of world government. To the question whether he could "foresee the possibility of the world being united under one central governing body composed of representatives of the component parts," Gandhi replied on 8 June 1947 that it was "the only condition on which the world can live." Lord Bertrand Russell, the foremost philosopher of our times, in his latest book, in 1963, writes that "there are exactly the same reasons for World Government as there are for the internal governments of the separate States." It is strange that while there is provision in each state for preventing private murder, there is no such provision for the prevention of the murder of one country by another. The irony of this predicament is all the more obvious as we are in possession of nuclear weapons, capable of mass extermination. It is time that humanity reiterated the overwhelming need of a supra-national government to control the dangerous power of the sovereign nation-states. In the realization of this universal goal, mankind can derive inestimable guidance and inspiration from the imperishable *De Monarchia*. In our quest for world government, there is no greater pathfinder than Dante. The last word on this topic may as well be left to him. In *De Monarchia*, Dante says:

> O humanity, in how many storms must you be tossed, how many

shipwrecks must you endure, so long as you turn yourself into a many-headed beast lusting after a multiplicity of things! You are ailing both in your intellectual powers, as well as in your heart: You pay no heed to the unshakable principles of your higher intellect, nor illumine your lower intellect with experience, nor tune your heart to the sweetness of divine counsel when it is breathed into you through the trumpet of the Holy Spirit: "Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

Dante's message is as true today as when it was first delivered by him in his *De Monarchia.*

V. V. RAMANA MURTI

Nonentity

No rosy horizon redeemed
His monotonous landscape,
Romance was a moon in eternal eclipse,
Yet, as the sun illumines the clouds
His spirit shone
With a faith that defied his fate
And shed on others its unseen rays
So that all men loved to bask in his light.

HERBERT BLUEN

JOHN E. OWEN

Rationalism Re-examined

[Dr. John E. Owen, Professor of Sociology at the Arizona State University, is an old friend and we are glad to have again a contribution from his pen. Very wisely he applies reason to the problem of the limitations of reason. He points out that any permanent aspect of human experience has an inherent validity of its own and that religious experience cannot be dismissed because it does not fit into the special scientific forms of reasoning popular in our century. Rather must reason be devoted to the clearing away of ritual and superstition from the practice of religion and the seeking of the valuable core of religious experience. This is a view of the function of reason with which we are in profound sympathy. Religion and Reason are not alternatives: they both belong to the feelings of spiritual life.—ED.]

HOSTILITY TO RELIGION has usually been regarded as the most significant element in the rationalist world-view. It is perhaps the main bond of union between rationalists themselves. Yet is the concentration upon religion as a prime target for the ammunition of reason a rational procedure today?

Are rationalists and secularists justified in their implicit assumption that the underlying truths of religion can be largely if not completely explained away by modern knowledge? Because these truths may be couched, as they frequently are, in relatively archaic language, are religious and spiritual insights necessarily invalid and their profundities rendered meaningless because expressed in mythology?

Men manifest both the will and the need to believe. If they find psychological satisfaction and achieve an integration of purpose and personality through adherence to a religious ideology, should they be pitied because to others this ideology appears outmoded? Can rationalists offer any other outlook, religious or secular, which will adequately fulfil the needs of human beings in their life-situation as it actually exists? Some type of faith has always been central to man's experience, whether this faith assumes the form of superstitious magic or rational-ethical idealism. But the professed followers of reason have no monopoly of enlightenment, and even the most empirically-minded scientist is not completely free from what Comte called the "theological stage" of thought.

Religion is so broad a department of life as to include numerous degrees of intellectual and ethical insight. Man's mental pilgrimage does not involve a journey from total darkness into total light. No rationalist could be equally opposed, with reason, to all forms of religious thought and expression Rather than fulminating against "religion," *per se*, would

it not be wiser and more practically effective for rationalists to recognize the thoughtful and rational elements within its ranks in an effort to purify the whole? There are profound variations of world-view in most of the world's great faiths. Even the most ardent secularist can gain new perceptions from the ethical and spiritual teachings of the founders of religions, as distinct from the doctrines of their priestly followers and the less intelligent among their interpreters.

One of the most apparent deficiencies of rationalism, of which its followers are so often unaware, is its neglect of the supra-rational and mystical elements in religion, to which a long line of respected thinkers through the centuries have given attention. As Dr. Radhakrishnan has well stated:

> If there are quarrels among religions it is because we shun all mystery and express religious truths in intellectual terms. The Supreme Reality cannot be unveiled in propositional forms. We can express it only through imaginative symbols. Disputes about dogmas have led to hysteria among the masses and fanaticism among the leaders. We have to get beyond dogmas if we are to feel the truth in the deeper layers of our consciousness. Religious forms without religious experience do not satisfy man's longing for spiritual fulfilment.[1]

Rationalists would probably be in agreement regarding the significance of and the need for applied ethics in human affairs. But can they build a new ethic without regard for religious tradition? Both Hinduism in the East and Christianity in the West have deep roots in their respective cultures. Is there anything irrational or intellectually disreputable about a modern interpretation of either the Hindu or the Christian ethic? Is a religious view of the world crisis *ipso facto* invalid, simply because it is religiously grounded? Is a secular analysis necessarily inclusive of all the factors in the human situation? Are rationalists justified in assuming that they can establish a new ethical system, not to speak of an adequate moral dynamic, completely divorced from the philosophical tradition that surrounds them?

Religion and secularism both arise from and are nourished by the same culture. If rationalists could find a means of enabling the forces of modern religion to stress their ethical teachings, in contradistinction to the theological and the supernatural, they might be more influential in the world of affairs. Do rationalists not have an obligation to enlighten and modernize the religious and social *milieu* around them, instead of being content with a merely critical and negative tone?

Tolerance and understanding of the historical reasons for religious

[1] S. RADHAKRISHNAN : *Fellowship of the Spirit* (The Centre for the Study of World Religions, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A. 1961), p. 8

ideology involve a degree of mental and spiritual maturity that transcends destructive attacks upon the more vulnerable deficiencies of religious traditionalism. Humility and altruism, among the highest religious virtues, are ultra-rational. Yet they cannot be attained in a complex culture without a discriminating wisdom. Intelligence and moral idealism are both required for the amelioration of any society. Rationalism is grounded in a belief in the value of the first of these. Can it be depended upon to generate the second? When rationalism as a critical minority movement becomes detached from the currents of religious thought, it sacrifices the constructive possibility of acting as a leavening agent in those currents.

> Spiritual perception and intellectual effort are not opposed to each other. Spiritual perception is integral insight. The high degree of intelligence which we have developed in the course of centuries should be used and not scrapped if we are to rid religion of errors and illusions.... Intuition without reason is blind; reason without intuition is ungrounded. Only when they are held in balance does man attain wholeness.

So writes Dr. Radhakrishnan.[2]

It should also be noted that intellectual modernity and critical insight are hardly effective as a practical ideology unless combined with moral fervour. What scheme of values does rationalism espouse and what type of personal and community life-pattern does it endorse? Its assumptions regarding the nature of man are frequently left un-expressed and unexamined. Humanistic rationalists are inclined to forget that they are just as subject as other men to the psychological, economic, and political pressures around them. This being so, what do they specifically hope to achieve as ends in view for society, and in what ways do these ends differ from traditional religious ideals?

These are not questions to which an easy answer can be given, in any culture. But neither can they be easily dismissed. For scientific rationalists to clarify their aims and underlying assumptions would involve carrying reason to the *n*th degree, defining the range of its potentialities as well as recognizing the areas of its limitations. As a modern English student of mysticism, Dean W. R. Inge, reminded us (*Faith and Knowledge* and *Truth and Falsehood in Religion*), there is nothing irrational in recognizing the limits of human reason. Can reason, as once narrowly conceived, be a sufficient inspiration for sustained and positive action? Does not the most courageous use of reason involve the full play of all human faculties, the most comprehensive grasp of all degrees of knowing, and wider presuppositions regarding the nature of man? One of the strengths of Hindu faith is seen at this point.

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[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 8–9

> Hinduism adopts a rationalistic attitude in the matter of religion. It tries to study the facts of human life in a scientific spirit, not only the obvious facts . . . but the facts of life's depths.[3]

If reason is to be brought to bear upon social problems, it will have to be a deeper rationality that does not ignore or decry any facet or dimension of man's being and psychic needs. The Comtean view that science can save us, the scientific optimism of the Age of Reason, assumed a host of philosophical issues to which the positivist has all too frequently appeared oblivious. The "proper study of mankind" may be man, but the concept of man's nature requires examining.

> The process of self-discovery is not the result of intellectual analysis but of the attainment of a human integrity reached by a complete mastery over nature. The old faith in mere reason that we will act properly if we think rightly is not true. Knowledge is of the nature of a decoration, an exhibit with no roots. It does not free the mind.[4]

Hinduism grants a place to reason while recognizing that there is much more to man than "mere reason."

And with all respect to rational intelligence and its scientific-cultural achievements, these can become dangerous in the extreme unless combined with moral idealism, compassion, and a sense of meaning in man's life and destiny. It is naive to suppose that a faith which can engender these elements can be dispensed with easily. As for the less constructive sides of orthodox religious traditionalism, are there not many other social forces whose practical consequences are, in the last analysis, far more destructive of human values in the twentieth century?

The problems that thinking men and women should regard as their primary concern will differ in successive historical eras. Today, in most countries, the contemporary harmful myths and immediate pressing problems that call for intelligent and rational action are not those of theological belief. They are political, sociological, racial, and economic. To attack these current problems, the valid moral insights of the past will have to be combined with the most advanced scientific knowledge of the present, under the framework of a meaningful and inspiring system of values. This is a complex but constructive task that should appeal to all men of intelligent good will. And the civilized and humane values that spring from a religious tradition can prove very significant in affording an up-to-date rationale for action.

JOHN E. OWEN

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[3] S. RADHAKRISHNAN: *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (Oxford University Press, New York. 1959), pp. 20–21

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 23

LILA RAY

The Evaluation of Man

[Our old and esteemed friend Shrimati Lila Ray, reflects here on the place of man in the Universe. Science has deflated the kind of self-importance that made human beings take other kingdoms of nature as created expressly for their use and amusement. Nevertheless human beings have a unique place in the process of evolution; for the next step in it must depend on how they interpret their responsibility to nature and their own species. The right attitude for them seems to us to be one neither of pride nor of contented insignificance but the modest and responsible one of a good elder in the household.—ED.]

"HUMAN LIFE is the vehicle of the highest perfection it is possible to attain." In so saying the *Bardo Thödol,* scripture of the Tibetans, both assesses the value of human life and provides it with a purpose.

The assessment is in complete agreement with the traditional Western attitude that regards man as the highest and best of living creatures. In olden times it led man to regard himself as the centre of the universe. Now, thanks to science, he knows that he is not the centre in any absolulte sense. He is a centre of life just as every living cell is a centre of life, but the cosmos does not revolve around him nor was it created for his benefit. The discovery of evolutionary process, however, has confirmed the belief that he is the most highly developed creature yet evolved. More perfect beings may evolve; it is both likely and desirable that they shall; but man as he is today will be their forerunner.

The biological sciences have revealed to us the marvellous delicacy and complexity of the human body and its constituents. As its possessor man has at his disposal an instrument capable of the most precise and refined achievement. It is not the fault of science if he often uses it as an unthinking babe might use a fine watch, without any comprehension. Science and religion, ancient and modern, Eastern and Western, are agreed about the importance attaching to human life and are aware of its potentialities.

The most radical step yet taken in historical and biological evolution is the development of powers of conscious thought in the human being. In this man differs from all preceding types. Because he has the power of conscious thought he is able to formulate values. The realization of these values must be added to the criteria of progress, biological and otherwise. The introduction of criteria based on values, Julian Huxley so clearly shows us, may alter the direction of progress, putting it on a higher level. In our bodies and in the values which form our character, we have about the only sphere of activity left in the modern world over which man as an individual retains some measure of control.

Man is born into two worlds, an inner and an outer, a spiritual and a physiological. Inwardly he is an individual, unique, superior. Every man, the Greeks believed, has the capacity to do almost everything. In various phases of his development he acquires the characteristics that are of the maximum use to him at that time and in that place. Some of these inevitably become handicaps when his circumstances change. Man finds himself either forced to abandon them altogether or to modify them. It often requires only a minor alteration in structure to transform one thing into another. These changes, in the world of conscious thought, are accomplished by the Intelligence, the *Buddhi,* through the separation and recombination of elements that would otherwise be undistinguished and undistinguishable. The Intelligence is guided in this task by the values which are dominant, giving them priority according to the scale adopted.

Values are both universal and personal. They can be divided into three categories: those indispensable to the existence of life on earth; those indispensable to the existence of human life; and those indispensable to the achievement of the highest perfection. The first two are general; the last, individual. We all share the general. "Thou shalt not kill" is perhaps the first codification of the value attached to life made by man and the one widest in its application, the most general. It is found in the earliest known codes of law — long before it was incorporated into the Bible we see it emphasized by Hammurabi. Killing is and has been, at all times and in all places, strictly controlled by custom and law. It is not perhaps without significance that where the struggle for survival is hardest, as among the Eskimoes, the murder rate is lowest.

The highest manifestation of human life is achieved, says Confucius, when we have found the clue of moral being that unites us with the universal order. This he regards as the central clue to man's being. It provides a nucleus, a point of focus, around which we can build ourselves, uniting man's inner with his outward world. These worlds are, as it were, concentric, and this point is the centre of both. Hence the close relation between them. The outward world appears to reflect the condition of the inner. Man tends to build the outer world exactly the way he conceives reality to be. The sun, Nagarjuna reminds us, can be seen only by its own light. Can you turn a spotlight on it?

The two poles of man's psyche, the inner and the outer, are indissolubly bound up with each other. Jung tells us that the individual is the sole and natural carrier of life and that this law is valid throughout nature. Life can fulfil its meaning only in the individual. Chagall the painter declares, "Everything may change in our demoralized world except the heart, man's love and his striving to know the divine." The individual heart is the place of all action. The highest kind of knowledge is an

integral and integrating principle that comprehends the aspect of emotion as well as cognition and comprises compassion as well as truth. As the knowledge of the ultimate nature of things it completes, destroys ignorance, puts an end to passion, purifies wisdom, and turns the attention of people away from ordinary objects of pleasure, fixing it on the highest source of aesthetic, intellectual, and spiritual satisfaction. So it is that we are brought to the acceptance of physical life as a revelation of the spiritual. Every ill of the human soul has its antidote in a change of inner attitude which will alter our relation with the outside world. Anger is countered by compassion, hate by love, etc., as Spinoza told us long ago. Ills of the human heart and mind can be cured without causing injury to the patient or to those who are associated with him.

Evolutionary progress is in the direction of increased control, increase of independence, increase of internal co-ordination, increase of knowledge, increase of means for co-ordinating knowledge, of elaborateness and intensity of feeling. Huxley sums it up in these words. What is concentrated and controlled is more effective than what is merely powerful and majestic. The man who is self-disciplined and versatile is not only a finer but a stronger creature than one who submits to no discipline that is not imposed from without. A man who cannot govern himself or organize himself can scarcely be trusted with the organization or governance of a country.

That the mastery of the senses is necessary to the conscious act of living is generally conceded. Without a certain alert neutrality of mind, a neutrality which sets the mind free to catch any signal of danger in the outward world or, for that matter, any favourable opportunity, no man can survive. Even a boy must give his undivided attention to his sling if he wishes to hit his target. This is why, as Confucius tells us, the superior man goes through life without any single preconceived course of action or any taboo. He attends to a standard of right, pays attention to his duties, and is careful in his speech. He does not, adds Confucius, necessarily keep his promise.

Moral assumptions are tacitly accepted as the basis of civilizations and cultures. The inhibitions developed in each are closely related to them. Different techniques are evolved in different social set-ups for training the young in the observance of these codes and punishing violations. The operation of a code of this kind can be observed even among wolves. When a wolf, during a fight with another wolf, is cornered and the end seems a matter of seconds, he will be seen to suddenly assume a posture which exposes the most vulnerable part of his body, the jugular vein. His adversary checks his onslaught and lets him go. A wolf can appeal in this manner to the mercy of another wolf, but he cannot so appeal to a creature

who has not been conditioned to understand his gesture, one not bound by the code operating in the behaviour of wolves.

When, by education and experience, man is as largely freed from the traditional inhibitions of his several cultures as he is in many parts of the world today, he is confronted with the necessity of making moral or religious decisions on his own, isolated, responsibility. The terror of such exposure must be grasped if the magnitude of the psychic crisis through which mankind is passing is to be understood and dealt with in a constructive manner.

The choice before man seems to be to decide what kind of a man he wants to be. Only then can he set about making himself into that kind of man. If he chooses to continue in the direction of evolutionary progress in general he may reasonably hope to remain in the main stream of life.

Progress is a major fact of past evolution, but it is limited to a few selected stocks. It may continue in the future but its continuance is not assured. Man must work and plan consciously if he is to achieve further progress for himself and, through himself, for all life. He is biologically justified in regarding himself as the trustee of evolution.

Purposes are often unconscious, instinctive. They can be consciously made. If we wish to work toward the future we must formulate a purpose for ourselves that will lead us to it. The *Bardo Thödol* suggests that man's purpose should be to achieve the highest perfection it is possible to attain. The highest perfection. What is it? Let us take a look at the descriptions of the best type of man given at various times and places. In a hymn that was Gandhiji's favourite, the true Vaishnava is described as "free from passion and anger, greed and deceit." He does not touch another's wealth, his lips refrain from falsehood. He guards the purity of his thoughts, words, and deeds, is held by no bonds, and feels another's woes as his own. Shakespeare, in Sonnet 94, praises those

> . . . that have power to hurt and will do none . . .
> Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
> Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow. . . .

Arjuna's enemies in the *Gita* appear to be not so much the cousins who have taken up arms against him and face him across the field of battle as indecision, attachment, confusion, pride, anger, passion. The medieval Indian mystic, Kabir, names the same enemies. He sings:

> Anger, passion and pride,
> Ambition, lust, and desire,
> Are the foes that ride upon us.
> At our side fight our friends,
> Self-rule, piety, peace.

The Bauls, a sect influenced equally by Buddhist, Islamic, and Hindu scriptures, enumerate the same enemies, They call them the bad students in the school of life and ticketless travellers in life's train.

According to the *Talmud* the man who subdues his evil impulses is a mighty man. One who is slow to anger is better than the mighty. And one who rules his spirit, better than one who takes a city. The Psalms go further. A mighty man, they say, is the one who turns his enemy into a friend. Christian doctrine regulates our relationship with the outward world in a series of injunctions the practical nature of which is too often overlooked. Love your enemies, we are told. Bless them who curse you. Pray for those who despitefully use you. We are told not to judge or condemn. We are to behave towards others in the way we ourselves wish to be treated. Spinoza tells us that we should not rejoice when we are able to restrain our lusts; for we are able to restrain them because we rejoice in our human condition. Pericles dreamt of a city in which each man would be self-sufficient and all men interdependent. The Sanskrit poet, Vidya, tells us:

> The wise man takes the right and leaves the wrong,
> For such discrimination is natural to the great.
> Mix milk and water: the wild goose
> Will drink the milk and leave the water.

William James warns us that the human mind can be efficient only by picking out what to attend to and ignoring everything else. Otherwise what little strength it has is dispersed and it loses its way altogether. It is in this process of picking out, of choosing, that man creates himself. At birth he is a human being but not a personality. A man is created as a personality by his experiences and the way he responds to them. Nagarjuna tells us that the skilfulness of the Buddha consisted in his ability to live in the world and yet be free from pride and passion and a false sense of self. The right choices enable the life force to fulfil the evolutionary purpose in us. Anger, pride, greed, lust are all destructible. They can be killed. The life that animates man is not so easily defeated. The evolutionary power that has produced man cannot, as the *Gita* points out, be cut, kindled, wetted, or dried up. It is unalterable, unknowable, manifest in all things, and confined in none. The birth and death of living things, including man as a single unit, is a minor part of its great creative motion. Let us eliminate from our inner world the things which impede its progress. Man will survive, evolve, and achieve the highest perfection only if he aligns himself with it.

LILA RAY

JOAN N. BURNETT

Reflections on a Dark Mystery

[Our much esteemed friend Mrs. Joan N. Burnett, L.L.A., has written five novels with Scottish settings and many stories and verses for children. She is deeply interested in any efforts for world peace and for many years used to be a Speaker for the League of Nations Union. She also spent what she describes as "ten most happy years" in voluntary work for Old People's Welfare. Mrs. Burnett brings to bear on the subject of cancer — probably the most formidable of the enemies modern medicine has not yet conquered — a delicate, almost mystical, intuitive perception. She speaks of the possible natural allegory by which the voracious cancer cells may serve to remind us of what is the root of all sin — an obstinate sense of separation from all other beings and things. Mrs. Burnett does not press any conclusion upon the reader, but her writing is suggestive.—ED.]

IT IS doubtless a right instinct that keeps most of us from letting our thoughts dwell on disease, from the point of view both of not laying ourselves open to it and of not creating harmful astral images. But it may be right, too, to ponder on it sometimes, setting the subject in the full light of consciousness, rather than to leave it in the dark where it can cause damage alike to ignorant and to sensitive minds.

This applies particularly to the dread malady, cancer, surrounded hitherto by utter silence and fear, as though through a tacit understanding that merely to speak of it was to invite the evil. Even in this modern day and age many of us must have caught our breath one evening last autumn when the stark announcement came over the radio — "Richard Dimbleby is suffering from cancer." Dimbleby's was a household name in Britain, for he was the commentator on all great national occasions; with television he became a world figure, and very specially so in 1965 when he gave a poignant description of Sir Winston Churchill's funeral only a few months before entering hospital.

His young son explained the announcement. "It was my father's wish that it should be made." Dimbleby deliberately broke through the conspiracy of silence in the hope that other sufferers might lose a little of their dread and be emboldened to seek medical advice at a sufficiently early stage to have a good chance of healing. He himself died soon afterwards, but his frankness and his very death have borne fruit. The "Richard Dimbleby Cancer Fund" has raised huge sums, to be devoted to cancer research, and a special edition of the television programme "Panorama," with which he was principally associated, has brought the disease into sharp focus, giving the fullest possible information and urging the need for early diagnosis.

A leading cancer surgeon writes in the *Radio Times* of 3 February 1966:

> This international disease is on the increase and extra thousands die from it every year. No nation escapes its effects and practically every family [in this country (Britain) has a member with it at one time or another. . . . [India's share, he goes on to say] is predominantly cancer of the mouth and throat, shown to be associated with chewing tobacco, sometimes with the addition of the betel leaf and nut.

We may well ask, Why is this? Why such a (seeming) curse on the human body? Various causes are continually being suggested: wrong diet, smoking, physical injury, the effect of chemicals either in food or when handled or inhaled at work, and of course inheritance — we know that children can be born with it. But this article is not written from the medical point of view. It does not ask why certain people become victims. It asks rather, Why should cancer exist? and, Why should the distinguished surgeon quoted above make this remarkable statement, so unexpected from any modern scientist: *"Cancer is an enormous experiment which Nature is carrying out in mankind*; we must try to understand the mechanism of this experiment"? We must indeed — but the meaning rather than the mechanism. Mortals differ from the gods, of whom it is written in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* that they "love what is mysterious and dislike what is evident." We certainly do not, and cannot, love the mysterious when it menaces our good, least of all when it is bound up with suffering and is a bringer of death.

Cancer is supremely mysterious. One senses something in this disease above all others which seems almost purposeful in its evil, almost a deliberate occult malignancy. Time and again it attacks those who have led outstandingly spiritual lives. Shri-Ramakrishna, Shri-Ramana-Maharshi, the late Pope John, are three notable examples, but it is a fact that strikes one repeatedly in reading biography and history, as well as in daily life.

We seek for light on this problem, and the Vedic seers, for once, do not give it. They seem to have been so fully possessed of glorious abounding Brahmic Being that disease had no place in their meditations, and therefore they do not speak of it. In the Christian Gospels disease is often linked with sin. But Christ himself never gives utterance to the shocking blasphemy of many pious folk, namely that it is "the will of God." He constantly opposes it, casts it out, triumphs over it. "This woman," he says of one sufferer, *"whom Satan hath bound."* But he never explains it, except — obliquely — in those cases where he seems to imply that its presence in the body is the counterpart of sin in the soul. And with all reverence we have to counter this with the remembrance that there

are many among its victims —-many among those personally known to us — of whom this cannot possibly be true. So what of them?

To return to cancer specifically. For it may well, in its dark power of destruction, be taken as the prototype of all disease. Are we right or wrong in conceiving this idea that it often seems to show a kind of dreadful purpose, a deliberate singling out of those whose bodies are so permeated by their spiritual principle that we might expect them to be immune to fleshly ills? As an English mystic of our own day[1] has pointed out: "The most innocent or the most sensitive often seem to be called to bear the heaviest burden of pain," the reason suggested being that "perhaps they are best qualified to bear it fruitfully." And though, in face of such a mystery, we should, possibly, hold our peace, an alternative hypothesis does spring to mind: can cancer, the supreme destroyer, be the ultimate attack of the wholly negative, *the non-light,* on those who have thwarted its forces most steadfastly and victoriously in life?

Another line of thought is this. The great flaw in our mortal state is egotism — the demand of each separate self made at the cost of every other. Hence spring all evils: greed, jealousy, fear and aggressiveness, envy, injustice, murder and total war. Egotism is negation *par excellence,* the ultimate *wrong*; for it denies the basic truth of the whole created order — unity. Could it be that the cancer cell is a precipitation of this spiritual fact, using "precipitation" in the chemical, or even the alchemical, sense? So far as we know its nature it is a devourer of other, normal, cells. It consumes ruthlessly, for its own ends, destroying the perfect balance, the mutual adjustment of cell to cell, wherein health consists. In its action we see (to quote again from *Towards Fidelity*), "the corruption of existence by ignorant desire," and "to be thus at war with life," the writer points out, "is the very cause and condition of all pain."

Is there a possibility that this violation of unity enacted in the human body (which body, we are taught, is the cosmos in little), demonstrates the great Law of Correspondence, "As above, so below," in the most compelling way possible, by showing it in action in our very flesh? Does a further possibility bear out the first? Such violation, alike cosmic and bodily, might be redeemed, i.e., annulled and transformed, by *acceptance* on the part of a soul. This might explain the involvement of the wholly spiritual man or woman in the extreme suffering that confounds us when we see it; for only those who have quelled every lower impulse and made themselves open channels for the Light could achieve such acceptance.

Let us turn to W. Q. Judge and his illuminating wisdom. In *The Ocean of Theosophy* he has something to say about the cell. Our body, he tells us, "is made up of a number of infinitesimal 'lives' " — lives more minute

[1] HUGH I'ANSON FAUSSET in *Towards Fidelity* (Gollancz)

than microbes, bacilli, and bacteria. "These lives . . . make up the cells," each separate cell, *per se*, being "the ideal form within which the actual physical atoms — made up of the 'lives' — arrange themselves." Obviously unity and harmony are the *sine qua non* of such a pattern, the *dharma* (if we may call it so) of each microscopic "life" consisting of "keeping ever within the limits assigned by evolution to the cell." But the pattern's full meaning is only revealed when Mr. Judge, speaking both as occultist and as teacher, goes on to tell us that of these infinitesimal lives "man is the great, the highest educator. . . . He should so live that they gain a fresh impulse to the higher life."

Now, is it speculating too wildly to suppose that *one* among these "lives" might begin to manifest in little the mysterious flaw which is writ large in human nature — egotism? Admittedly, we are dealing with the altogether mysterious. Even our modern scientist shows himself aware of this when he speaks of Nature carrying out an experiment in mankind.

What sort of an experiment, good or bad? Is it a demonic element warring on the spirit? Or is Nature, which, as Patanjali teaches us, "exists for the sake of the soul's experience and emancipation," demonstrating with agonizing literalness what can happen when egotism runs riot?

The voice of H. P. Blavatsky is not lacking as we grope in this darkness, for she says in *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 540):

> In living centres — far more central than the centres seen by the highest magnifying powers, in centres of living matter, where the eye cannot penetrate, but towards which the understanding may tend — proceed changes of the nature of which the most advanced physicists and chemists fail to afford us the conception . . . certainly of an order . . . wholly distinct from that to which any other phenomenon known to us can be relegated.

It is just possible that in an intuitive man absorbed in the cancer problem "the understanding may tend" in the right direction, and that our surgeon's astonishing statement may arise from a dim inkling of such "centres" and "changes"; but he will be on the wrong track if he proceeds to study the mechanism only. For there is not, says H.P.B., "the slightest reason to think that the nature of these changes will ever be ascertained by physical investigation." Have we a hint here that the mystery of cancer will only be solved spiritually?

We spoke above of acceptance. The evil cell, when it exists, must be redeemed, "inasmuch as Nature intends us," says Mr. Judge, "to use the matter which comes into our body and astral body for the purpose . . . of benefiting the matter by the impress it gets" from us. Now if, for the purpose of such redemption in the cause of evolution — a redemption carried out we know not how, but certainly by an act of the spirit —

some pure, devoted soul performs this in the body, it would explain why the dread disease comes so often to those we think of as "the best."

This inevitably implies the idea of sacrifice, which may repel modern minds. But who are we to dismiss it when, in one form or another, it is embodied in the myths of so many ancient faiths and was regarded as a basic reality, a basic necessity indeed, by all the Masters of the Mysteries, whose inspired knowledge of the cosmic order was so much greater than our own? Remember that sacrifice does not need an altar, or even a cross. "This is indeed the highest penance," says the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad,* "if a man laid up with sickness suffers pain."

Only the truly spiritual could perform such a sacrificial act, for only they could have reached the stage of assenting to it. And if we doubt whether even a saint could elect to bear cruel disease, we must remember that assent need not necessarily be conscious; it may be given in the depths of the soul, which sees clearly, as the mind cannot do, and where unity may already have been attained. "Man," says the late Shri-Krishna-Prem in his profound study of the *Kaṭhopaniṣad,* "is a citizen of three worlds and must ask and be willing for the sacrifice (the 'true sacrifice,' 'the sacrifice of the self'), *on every level of his being.*"

In this final possibility there is more conviction, surely, than in the thought that evil entities may be permitted to attack the faithful servants of the Light by a subtle undermining of the very nucleus of human life, the cell. It seems more in accord with the cosmic order as we know it, whose primal law is harmony, and in which all that dislocates this harmony must eventually be wrought into it, if necessary by sacrifice on the part of the good. With what different emotions would we watch some loved one's passing if we could realize that at that moment, despite their suffering or apparent unconsciousness, he or she was accomplishing the crowning act to which their whole life's purpose had tended!

These, however, are but reflections — a meditation on a very dark mystery, which at present, for all our boasted knowledge, we have to face in ignorance and humility. Cancer, the scourge of our race and age (which latter, as we know, is *Kali Yuga*), may or may not be "an enormous experiment which Nature is carrying out in mankind." Certainly these are strange, striking words, but they find their complement in others of far greater antiquity. "*Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.*"

Perhaps if we were to learn aright her lesson of the destructive power of self-seeking and self-interest when opposed to the unity of the whole, Nature would "open wide the portals of her secret chambers" and, from her own vast pharmacopoeia, yield up to some devoted student the long-sought remedy for this terrible disease.

JOAN N. BURNETT

ARTHUR L. HERMAN

The Philosophy of Tar-Water: Bishop Berkeley and Medico-pyro-pantheism

[Dr. A. L. Herman is well known to our readers by his philosophical articles. He is at present Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Wisconsin State University (Stevens Point, Wisconsin), U.S.A. In this remarkable article he expertly documents the theory and practice of the great philosopher Berkeley in regard to the use of tar-water as a panacea. The article is of great interest as a sidelight on the mind of a great philosopher — almost the central pillar of subjective idealism in the West. We print below the first part of this long article.—ED.]

I. The History of Tar-Water and Its Virtues

IN 1744, for the price of two shillings, a Londoner could purchase a very curious book entitled *Siris: Philosophical Reflections and Inquiries Concerning the Virtues of Tar-Water*. The work was an instant success, running to three editions in the first year with subsequent editions in 1746 and 1748. On the Continent it was translated into French in 1745 and into German, Low Dutch, and Portuguese in 1746.[1] Throughout the sick and civilized world of the mid-eighteenth century, the subject of tar-water and its virtues became a source of discussion and controversy for the next two decades.

The *Siris*[2] provided its purchaser with two exciting accounts. First, there was the claim that tar-water would cure nearly all the diseases known

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[1] *The Works of George Berkeley*. Ed. by ALEXANDER CAMPBELL FRASER (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 4 vols., 1901), Vol. III, "Editor's Preface to *Siris*," pp. 130-1. Fraser lists five editions of the work for this period, while John Oulton Wisdom lists six in *The Unconscious Origins of Berkeley's Philosophy* (The Hogarth Press, London. 1953), p. 77. All quotations by Berkeley are taken from Vol III of the Fraser edition, and will hereafter be indicated as "FRASER." Unless otherwise stated all quotations are from *Siris* in Fraser.

[2] It is a curious title to say the least, but Berkeley is able to demonstrate its pertinency admirably, with a double account of the origin of the word. On the one hand it meant "chain" (Greek, *sira*) a chain by which every being is connected ontologically to every being else in the universe:

"There runs a chain throughout the whole system of beings. In the chain one link drags another. The meanest things are connected with the highest." (FRASER, p. 270)

This Neoplatonic ontology has important implications for the metaphysics Berkeley is espousing in *Siris*.

On the other hand, *Siris* meant "Nile," for "Siris" was the name given to their river by the ancient Egyptians:

"The virtue of tar-water, flowing like the Nile from a secret and occult source, brancheth into innumerable channels conveying health and relief, wherever it is applied . . .." (*Ibid.* p. 319, and Fraser's note)

Attention is here called to the healing water itself Thus by this title Berkeley called attention to the ontological foundation for his theory as well as the healing properties possessed by his magic water; at the same time he lent to them both an aura of mystery and antiquity. The first medicine show was about to begin.

to civilized man and provide simple relief for all those others it could not cure. Second, the recipe for making tar-water was plainly revealed for all to read and follow, so that within a week one could begin the practice of homeopathy with very little fuss and bother. But portions of *Siris* were much neglected by that diseased reading public. In a book which "begins with tar and ends with trinity"[3] it would be only natural for an ailing European to neglect the Trinity and stick to the tar, especially when it was claimed that the tar held miraculous properties which could cure all ills, ailments, and miseries. The "prophet of tar-water," as Thomas H. Huxley disparagingly referred to the author of *Siris* some hundred years later,[4] had fastened on the public a work which appeared both medicinal and theological. It was only natural that the public should neglect the theology and devour the medicine — in thousands of gallons.[5] Subsequent Continental translations of the work, therefore, contained only those parts concerned with the miracle of tar-water, and neglected completely the theological and Neoplatonic elements of the original.[6] The author of this remarkable work was the Bishop of Cloyne, George Berkeley (1684-1753).

Siris, however poorly organized and disparate it might appear, is unified and ordered in the sense that the non-tar sections of the book provide the explanation of the tar sections. These non-tar, metaphysical parts in the text attempt to answer the question, "Why does such a natural substance as vegetable tar or resin cure human and animal disease?"[7] The answer, Berkeley felt, was to be found in the old Paracelsan dictum of "a cure in nature for nature's ills." It is this unpronounced presupposition which lies at the heart of the *Siris.*[8] What remains then is to explain

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[3] Quoted by Fraser in his "Editor's Preface to *Siris,*" p. 130, fn.

[4] *Hume With Helps to the Study of Berkeley* (D. Appleton and Company, London. 1894), p. 243. Huxley's attitude to Berkeley's tar philosophy is that of a nineteenth-century philosopher of the new science: cool and condescending.

[5] I don't believe my estimate of the amount of tar-water consumed is excessive. Considering its popularity, its easy accessibility, and the fact that manufacturing plants were established all over Europe to handle the demand leads me to conclude that this figure is not misleading. Cf. FRASER, p. 142, fn. 7.

[6] FRASER, "Editor's Preface to *Siris,*" pp. 130-1

[7] Cf. "A Letter By the Author of *Siris* to the Reverend Dr. Hales, on the Benefit of Tar-Water in Fevers For Cattle As Well As the Human Species," (published in 1747) in FRASER, *op. cit.,* pp. 334-6

[8] Cf. Berkeley's remarks about the *Archaeus* and the obviously Paracelsan chemists in FRASER, pp. 192-3; pp. 160-1, where J. B. Van Helmont, a Paracelsan, is mentioned; pp. 216-17, where Berkeley discusses Marcilius Ficinus, another Paracelsan. Note must also be made of the reference to the Hermetic writers and their doctrine since they had been the starting point of all alchemical philosophy whether Paracelsan or Berkeleyan: *Ibid.,* pp 177-8; 270-3; and 226-9, *passim,* where both Egyptian and Greek alchemical forerunners are discussed.

It is perhaps the superabundance of such sources that made John Oulton Wisdom comment on the *Siris* in general as follows:

"When he was nearing sixty, Berkeley wrote the most remarkable work ever penned by a modern philosopher, a mystical writing called *Siris.*" (*Op. cit.,* p. 63)

why nature is so organized as to make the cure possible through such a substance as tar-water.

The history of the publication of *Siris* and the possible reasons for Berkeley's interest in the subject of tar-water are too well known to need extensive recounting here.[9] It is sufficient to say that Berkeley discovered the properties of tar-water while sojourning in the New World attempting to establish a college in Bermuda during the years 1728 to 1731. He discovered that the Indians of this new land used tar-water to cure the smallpox. Consequently, when in 1741 the disease struck at his own Irish town of Cloyne the good Bishop, following the medical practice he had learned in America, gave the waters to his parishioners and discovered "... all those within my knowledge who took the tar-water having either escaped that distemper or had it very favourably."[10] His own wretched health and the unbelievable poverty of Cloyne demonstrated to him the desperate need for such a universal catholicon; his reading in Plato, the Neoplatonists and Paracelsus provided him with the explanation for the success of the drink; and finally his seclusion in Cloyne became the occasion for the writing and final publishing of the results of his labours and observations, the *Siris*.

In *Siris*, the claims that the prophet of tar-water makes for his miracle drink are practically limitless. Its beneficial results have been noted, he says, in cases of smallpox, ulcers, foulness of the blood, distemper, consumption, pleurisy, fevers, decreased appetite, asthma, hysteria, dropsy, etc., etc.[11]

Eight years later, and three months before his death, Berkeley was still exalting the virtues of tar-water and defending his belief about its curative properties against a growing band of sceptics. Thus he says in "Farther Thoughts on Tarwater"[12] that he can now strongly recommend his great discovery in such further cases as cancer, King's evil (one quart *per diem*), leprosy, quincies, idiocy and stupidity, fractures and wounds (the healing balm to be applied externally as well as internally), tumors and wens, and menstrual pains and cramps; in addition, it also purifies the blood during the menopause and thus cases that "... certain age or time of life when the female sex runs no small risk from the ceasing of their natural evacuations."[13] It will prevent circulatory stoppage, head-

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[9] A. A. LUCE: *Berkeley and Malebranche* (Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 175fn.; G. J. WARNOCK: *Berkeley* (Penguin Books 1953), Chapter 12, "Later Years"; JOHN OULTON WISDOM: *Op. cit.*, Chapter 7, "The Tar-Water Philosophy"; JOHN WILD: *George Berkeley, A Study of His Life and Philosophy* (Russell and Russell, Inc., New York. 1962), Part IV, "*Philosophia Prima.* The System of the *Siris*," pp. 399-479

[10] FRASER: p 143 [11] *Ibid.*, pp. 141-4 [12] FRASER: pp. 339-54

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 346

aches and nervous disorders, diabetes, yellow fever, scurvy and so on. Further "... children and oldsters can use it warm for agues, smallpox, measles, fevers, colic, disorders of the bowels, gout, rheumatism...."[14]

Berkeley's evidence for these staggering claims rests on three principal sources: his own introspective experiences in administering the drink to himself (and he did drink it "much and often"); his experiences with his own family and the parishioners whom he advised to take tar-water; and, finally, cures reported by people he has never seen, but who write to him detailing the before-and-after of their illness and their cure. These latter reports are perhaps not much better than gossip, but Berkeley is not above using them while being careful at the same time to state that such a report was had from another, or was delivered by one who had it in turn from another. The *Siris* and his later writing on tar-water are liberally sprinkled with examples from all three sources, and Berkeley endeavours to substantiate all of his cure-claims with references to one or another of them:

> I never knew anything so good for the stomach as tar-water: it cures indigestion and gives a good appetite.[15]
>
> My own sedentary course of life had long since thrown me into an ill habit, attended with many ailments, particularly a nervous colic, which rendered my life a burthen, and the more so because my pains were exasperated by exercise! But, since the use of tar-water, I find, though not a perfect recovery from my old and rooted illness, yet such a gradual return of health and ease that I esteem my having taken this medicine the greatest of all temporal blessings, and am convinced that, under Providence, I owe my life to it.[16]
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> ... and those within my knowledge who took the tar-water ... escaped that distemper [smallpox], or had it very favourably. In one family there was a remarkable instance of seven children, who came all very well through the smallpox, except one young child which could not be brought to drink tar-water as the rest had done.[17]
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> Having tried it in a great variety of cases, I found it succeeded beyond my hopes: in a tedious and painful ulceration of the bowels; in a consumptive cough, and (as appeared by expectorated pus) an ulcer in the lungs; in a pleurisy and peripneumony.[18]
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> ... a solemn affidavit of Captain Drape at Liverpool; whereby it appears that of 170 negroes seized at once by the smallpox on the coast of Guinea one only died, who refused to drink tar-water; and the remaining 169 all recovered, by drinking it, without any other medicine, notwithstanding the heat of the climate, and the incommodities of the vessel.[19]

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[14] *Ibid.*, p. 340 [15] FRASER: *Siris*, p. 144. [16] *Ibid.*, p. 187

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 143 [18] *Ibid.*, p. 144

[19] "Second Letter to Thomas Prior, Esq., On the Virtues of Tar-Water" (published in 1746) in FRASER, p. 320

> The recovery of Mrs. Wilson, daughter of the late Bishop of London, from a lingering hopeless disorder, was a noted case, and attested to by his Lordship. I have even been informed, upon good authority, of two or three instances wherein persons have been recovered by tar-water after they had rattles in the throat.[20]

Berkelely's discussion of the chemical properties of tar-water is both learned and painstaking, however inaccurate and incomplete it may be. For example, he declares, contrary to some of his detractors, that tar-water is not hot and inflaming. To be hot and inflammatory, he claims, tar-water would have to contain resin, a sulphurous substance which is "truly" hot and inflammatory. But Berkeley assures the reader that since water dissolves acids and salts, and only spirits of wine dissolve the "gross resinous parts" which contain sulphur, and since tar-water contains water and not alcohol, it follows that tar-water will hold only the salts and the acids of resin, but not the sulphurous parts. *Ergo,* tar-water is not hot and inflammatory.[21]

Berkeley delves into the ancient natural history of the pine and fir tree, and follows this with a discussion of eighteenth-century botanical theories about the evergreen. He notes Hebrew and Christian sources, together with Roman, Greek, and modern accounts, to add weight to his claim that the juice and substance of this tree possesses that strange but miraculous power to cure the physical and mental ills of man.[22]

Berkeley then compares his own discovery with the three major competing "Universal Medicines": soap, opium, and mercury. He acknowledges that soap is highly spoken of by many, but even these persons agree that soap has its limitations; for example in cases of an "inflammatory disposition" or in instances where an "obstruction is attended with a putrefactive alkali"; and it can be even downright dangerous in many cases, for example phthisis fever. But this is not the case with tar-water; for with all of the above illnesses, we are led to believe, it is "not only safe but useful."[23]

Having defeated soap, Berkeley now turns to opium. Opium is also limited in its application, producing "grievous disorders in hysterical or hypochondriacal persons"; but again, this is not the case with tar-water.[24]

Finally, Berkeley notes that while mercury does indeed seem to have become a medicine of very general use, and while it does have the power of doing great good in flushing out the capillaries, it is none the less dangerous. The principal danger with mercury lies in its great weight

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[20] "Farther Thoughts on Tar-Water" in FRASER, p. 352

[21] FRASER, pp. 144-5 [22] *Ibid.*, pp. 145-67 [23] *Ibid.*, p. 167 [24] *Ibid.*

and the resulting momentum that it attains in going through the blood. This means, quite simply, that mercury operates with tremendous mechanical force in the system, and that it could and in fact does do injury to the "... fine tender coats of those small vessels." This in turn, Berkeley states, brings on the untimely effects of old age. The prophet of tar-water concludes then once again that this is not the case with tar-water.[25]

Thus does tar-water emerge triumphant over all the great and close competition. It stands, ultimately, the good Bishop feels, as the only substance worthy of being called "the general and salutary Universal Medicine."

ARTHUR L. HERMAN

(*To be concluded*)

THE DEEPER we look into nature, the more we recognize that it is full of life, and the more profoundly we know that all life is a secret and that we are united with all life that is in nature. Man can no longer live his life for himself alone. We realize that all life is valuable and that we are united to all this life. From this knowledge comes our spiritual relationship to the universe.

—ALBERT SCHWEITZER

[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 167-8

K. VISWANATHAM

The Influence of the "Ramayana" and the "Mahabharata" on Indian Life and Literature

[Shri K. Viswanatham, Reader in English at Andhra University, wirtes with his usual depth of feeling about the place the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* have had in the making of the Indian mind. If the vast masses of India, though illiterate, are nevertheless well instructed and cultured in a sense deeper than academic, this is surely because itinerant preachers and narrators have made them familiar with the wealth of philosophical and ethical perception in these two epics.—ED.]

HE DID NOT KNOW any book anywhere, said Nehru, which had exercised such a continuous and pervasive influence on the mass mind as these two. Dating back to a remote antiquity, they are still a force in the life of the Indian people. The *Rāmāyaṇa* is the *ādikāvya* — the first epic and the foremost in beauty and blessedness. Not all perhaps can enter, as Shri-Aurobindo puts it, at once into the spirit of this masterpiece; but those who have once done so will never admit any poem in the world to be its superior. Drenching us in *karuṇā* (pathos), it is perpetually modern because Valmiki is an Existentialist and his, a mighty and embracing mind. The epic contains the following verse foretelling its everlasting fame:

Yāvat sthāṣyanti girayaḥ saritaśca mahītale
tāvat Rāmāyaṇa-kathā lokeṣu pracariṣyati
(As long as mountain ranges stand
And rivers flow upon the earth,
So long will this *Rāmāyaṇa*
Survive upon the lips of men.)

The *Mahābhārata* is an *itihāsa,* the fifth Veda — a huge encyclopaedia of knowledge and power shedding peace over annihilation's waste. This dateless and deathless poem is the Book of Books, a whole literature in itself — the *itihāsa* (chronicle), *kāvya* (poem), *śāstra* (sacred science), *smṛti* (scripture) of the Hindus. Its greatness lies, according to a critic, in its very fecundity. What is not here is not elsewhere:

Dharme ca arthe ca kame ca mokshe ca bharatarṣabha
yadihāsti tadanyatra yannehāsti na kutracit.

The story pulses and smoulders with the turbulence of bitter passions, reeks of and reddens with the violence of obstinate blood. But it is a saga of *Dharma*: *yato dharmastato jayaḥ*; and it is daily enacted in our lives.

The prophecy of the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s immortality has been perhaps even

more abundantly fulfilled than the well-known prediction of Horace. No product of Sanskrit literature enjoys a greater popularity down to the present day than the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Its story furnishes the subject of many other Sanskrit poems as well as plays, and still delights from the lips of reciters the hearts of myriads of Indian people, as at the great Rama festival at Banaras. It has been translated into many Indian languages. Above all it inspired the greatest poet of medieval Hindustan, Tulasi Das, to compose in Hindi his version of the epic, entitled *Rāmacaritamānasa*, which, with its ideal standard of virtue and purity, is a kind of Bible to a hundred million of the people of North India.

Dr. Raghavan introduces the other great epic in this manner: The *Mahābhārata* of Sage Vyasa is comparable only to the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Sage Valmiki in its hold over the millions of Hindus, a hold which the Titan of time has failed to render less strong. Dharmaputra is still the inspiring example of all who have made truthfulness and righteousness the only motive force of their action; Karna is still the standard of comparison for the munificent; Arjuna the Nara is still loved as the ideal man. And what Hindu is there whom the faith does not sustain that, in his hour of trial when everybody has forsaken him, the Lord who saved Draupadi will come to his rescue? The epic is great in size, great in weightiness; hence the name — *mahattvāt bhāravattvācca Mahābhāratamucyate*. It is enough to note that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* can be lifted from a corner of the *Mahābhārata*:

> And yet such lofty thoughts
> And such deep feeling the Iliad does not show.

And it contains the immortal dialogue, the Hymn before Action, between Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa. Mr. Levy has said finely that the opening phase of a desperate battle may be considered dramatically inopportune for philosophic discussion; but that it is in fact a daring stroke of genius which removes the field of Kurukṣetra from the holy land of Hindu patriotism to the battleground of all men's minds. Learnt at the mother's knee with reverence and love, in the words of Rajaji, the *Mahābhārata* has inspired great men to heroic deeds as well as enabled the humble to face trials with fortitude and faith.

These two epics are the structure and texture of Indian life; they are scripture and history, song and sermon, ethics and aesthetics, to the Hindus. They are felt in the blood and felt along the heart of this great country. They are the biography of India's aspirations and urges, strivings and purposes. They are our Collective Unconscious, wherein breathe the united soul of India and the individual souls of her people. Vālmīki's snail-horn sensitiveness, Vyāsa's colossal strength, and Kālidāsa's silken

sensuousness sum up, writes Shri-Aurobindo, the complex soul of India.

Some Hindus make a daily *pārāyaṇa* of the *"Sundara Kāṇḍa"* or of *"Gāyatrī Rāmāyaṇa"* or the *Gītā* or parts of the *Mahābhārata*. They do *Rāma-nāma-japam* or complete *Rāma-koti* (ten million repetitions of Rāma's name). They open these Books at random and take the *sortes*. The epics are recited and explained by *kathākāras* to their reading and "un-reading" publics. The Indian masses are illiterate, but not uneducated. The strolling players and *kathākāras* are a sort of popular lectures programme. The Rāma story and the Bhārata saga are part of the intellectual and emotional equipment of the masses. Annually in several places the story of Rāma is enacted and effigies of Rāvaṇa, Indrajit, and others are burnt: *Ramo Ramo Rama iti prajānāmabhavan kathāḥ.*

Western critics who see only polyandry in the *Mahābhārata,* agriculture in the *Rāmāyaṇa,* and a divine cheat in Kṛṣṇa will deserve our thanks if they stop talking such nonsense. The illiterate masses of India who listen in rapt attention to the story of Sītā or Draupadī, Damayantī or *Sāvitrī,* are better than these index-card scholars grubbing for everything except poetic ideas. The epic is not a jungle of information or a literary monster. Rāma is the ideal son and Sītā the ideal wife. King Dharma is the king of Dharma and Arjuna the peerless warrior and knight of chivalry. These epic heroes and heroines spell out our ideals, graph our emotions, articulate our aspirations, guide our steps to an ampler, divine air. Who can read without a certain elevation of soul Dharma's noble reply to Indra's *Tyajaivainam*:[1]

Mā me śriyā saṅgamanam tayāstu
yasyāḥ kṛte bhaktajanam tyajeyam

(Never let me be joined to that glory for whose sake a loyal dependant must be abandoned)?

What can be a finer ideal to the war-torn world than *Ayudhenaiva vijayam vardhayet vasudhādhipah* (A king should add to his victories without war)? Dharma's *Paraiḥ paribhave prāpte vayam pancottaram śatam*[2] is still relevant to us, divided by extra-territorial loyalties. We should still try to practise his sense of fair play as illustrated in *ubhe saputre syātām vai viśeṣo nāsti me tayoḥ*[3] — as we are torn apart by

[1] Indra calls on Dharmarāja to abandon a dog that has followed him faithfully and mount a chariot that will take him to heaven.

[2] Dharmarāja is exhorting his brothers to rescue their cousins, the hundred Kauravas. The latter were advancing on the Pāṇḍavas' forest retreat, after having forced them into exile, when they fell foul of the celestial army of Gandharvas. Dharmarāja says, "As against strangers, we are a hundred and five."

[3] In one episode Dharmarāja's four brothers are dead, having drunk of a forbidden pool. For answering rightly the questions of the Guardian Spirit, he is allowed to ask for one brother to be restored to life. He asks for the youngest stepbrother, so that both his mother and his stepmother may continue to have at least one son living. As a reward for his justness, the Guardian Spirit, really Yamadharma, the Judge of the Dead, restores all brothers.

linguistic madness. The magnanimity of Rāma in *Mamāpi eṣa yathā tava,*[4] or the amazing courtesy implied in his address to Matali: *Smāraye tvām na śikṣaye,*[5] or his unfathomable love for Sītā in *Hāropi nārpitaḥ kaṇṭhe sparśasaṁrodhabhīruṇā*[6] — open wide the portals of our hearts and raise us above this low-thoughted world.

It is reported that the wife of a Hindu criminal condemned to death begged the authorities that she might be executed first so that she might not die a widow. That incident speaks volumes for the hold that Hindu ideals have upon women. To follow the husband like his shadow, not to shadow him like a detective, is the be-all and end-all of a Hindu wife's ideal: Sītā and Sāvitrī have conditioned every Hindu woman's emotional life. Readers should be familiar with Kipling's Boondi Queen. Every Hindu wife is a minor edition of Sītā. There is not a Hindu woman, writes R. C. Dutt, whose earliest and tenderest recollections do not cling round Sītā's suffering and Sītā's faithfulness, told in the nursery, taught in the family circle, remembered and cherished throughout life. Sītā is not an abstraction as some obtuse Orientalists say; it was a gracious touch of Vālmīki that she weeps more for her mother-in-law Kausalyā than even for Rāma.

It is related of Shivaji that he never left or entered his palace without touching his mother's feet. A king of the South, when he read that Rama single-handed marched against Khara and his hordes of demons, shouted for his bow and arrows that he might rush to Rāma's help. Thyagayya's immortal music and the temple at Bhadrachalam are fadeless monuments of the hold of Rāma over the Hindu mind. He is the darling idol: *buddhimān madhurabhāshī pūrvabhāshī priyaṁvadaḥ*; one is apt to say with Daśaratha: *"Na tu Rāma vinā dehe tiṣthettu mama jīvitam"* (Not without Rāma will my life linger in my body).

All over this *puṇyabhūmi* (holy land) places are associated with the great heroes and heroines of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*: "To people the steep rocks and river banks with their soul-edifying deeds."

All later Sanskrit literature draws heavily and constantly upon these two mighty epics. The whole of the English language, it has been said, is between the covers of the First Folio; likewise the contents of most Sanskrit plays and poems are between the covers of these two epics. It

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[4] After Rāvaṇa is slain, Rāma says to his brother Vibhīṣaṇa, "He is mine as he is yours."

[5] When, for the last single combat, charioteer Mātali is sent down to Rāma with the heavenly chariot, Rāma begins to give him instructions, then suddenly and superbly checks himself to say : "I but remind you ; I do not presume to teach you."

[6] Rāma says to Lakṣmaṇa : "I did not even place a garland round my Sītā's neck for fear of the barrier it would become between us." No wonder that Gandhiji regarded the *Rāmāyaṇa* as a great love-story.

is sufficient to say that the *Uttararāmacarita* and the *Raghuvaṁśa* are quarried from the *Rāmāyaṇa*; the *Śākuntala* and the *Kirālārjunīya*, from the *Mahābhārata* — an excellent illustration of Arnold's recipe: Choose the subject well; the rest will follow. The *Rāmāyaṇa* alone is the source-book for the following: *Mahāvīracarita* and *Uttararāmacarita, Hanumannāṭaka, Anargharāghava, Prasannarāghava, Abhirāmamaṇi, Bālarāmāyaṇa, Udāttarāghava, Unmattarāghava, Calitarāma, Dūtāṅgada, Setubandha, Campūrāmāyaṇa, Rāghavābhyudaya, Rāghavapāṇḍavīya, Rāghavavilāsa, Rāmāyaṇamañjarī*, etc. And Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* is one of several, like *Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa, Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa, Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa, Agniveśya Rāmāyaṇa, Yoga Vāsiṣṭha, Mantra Rāmāyaṇa, Kambar's Bhattakāvya, Jaina Rāmāyaṇa, Daśaratha Jātaka*, etc.

Great and pervasive should have been the influence of these epics in Greater India when South-east Asia was under her cultural hegemony. The Rāmā legend seems to have undergone strange transformations during its Odyssey in South-east Asia: Sītā becomes the daughter of Rāvana or the sister of Rāma! These most remarkable poems, wrote Sir Edwin Arnold, contain almost all the history of ancient India, so far as it can be recovered, together with such inexhaustible details of its political, social, and religious life that the unique Hindu world stands epitomized in them. The stories, songs and ballads, the histories and genealogies, the nursery tales and religious discourses, the art, the learning, the philosophy, the creeds, the moralities, the modes of thought, the very phrases, sayings, and terms of expression, and the daily ideas of the Hindu people are taken from these poems.

These are not mere *itihāsas* but *upadeśagranthas* nurturing hope in us: *eti jivantiamānando naram varṣaśatādapi.*

Or exhorting us to meditate upon Nārāyaṇa: *eṣa me sarva-dharmānām dharmādhikatamo mataḥ.*

Hindus believe that by a study of these epics they are purged of their sins: *mahābhāratamṃkhya sarva papaiḥ pramuccyate.* "One may tour all over India and see all things but one cannot understand India's way of life unless one has read the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* at least in a good translation." They are the acknowledged legislators of the Hindu world because the gospel of DHARMA, to quote Rajaji, runs like a golden thread through all the complex movements: *dharmena nidhanam śreyaḥ na jayaḥ pāpakarmaṇā.*

The Andhras have a saying: "If you read at all, read the *Mahābhārata*; if you eat at all, eat the black-gram pastry."

K. VISWANATHAM

New Books and Old

"Totemism in India" *

INDIA is a rich field for the anthropologist. Surprisingly enough, the harvest reaped has not been commensurate: Indian anthropology has still to attain its majority. Only recently, the late Dr. Verrier Elwin in his autobiography, *The Tribal World of Verrier Elwin*, brought a new outlook and abundant fresh air into this field.

Totemism is an interesting and intellectually romantic theme for anthropological study and scholarship. Thirty years ago Hermann Niggemeyer published his work on totemism in India. Impressive and pioneering as that work was, it has now naturally become out of date because of much new material since discovered, which demands rethinking on the subject.

The learned author, who is at present the Reader in Cultural Anthropology at the University of Bombay, has done useful work in bringing out this study, and deserves congratulation upon his selection of a subject. The basis of this work was a dissertation that he prepared at the Ethnological Institute of the University of Vienna for his PH.D., inspired by Professor J. Haekel, Director of the Institute. The tribes concerned include the Mundas, the Gondid, the Bhils, the Negrito of the Andaman Islands, and the tribes of Assam, South India, and Maharashtra.

Niggemeyer defined and emphasized some outstanding and characteristic features of Indian totemism. Except in the extreme south, totemism exists throughout India. Originally Indian totemism was organized on predominantly patrilineal lines, in spite of the two matrilineal-totem regions in Southwest India and Assam. Niggemeyer's important contribution was to show the stress laid on exogamy by the totem clans in India, which are in all cases combined into strictly endogamous castes and tribes. His view that sex totemism is lacking in India may be open to doubt. The religious side of Indian totemism, the wide-spread worship of the totem in India, and its sociological impact in the worship of the totem at marriages, especially in Maharashtra and Central India, did not escape Niggemeyer's notice. He also ventured the thesis that probably the original bearers of totemism are Eickstedt's Gondid racial group, from which fact was deduced the ancient origin and relatively great age of Indian totemism. He also suggested that totemism had by group exogamy contributed to the development of advanced culture for more than a thousand years. Finally he concluded that Indian totemism was historically connected with totemism in other parts of the world.

This book gives an excellent representation of the views of many scholars on both totemism in general and Indian totemism in particular. Interesting references are made to the Freudian theory to point out the psychological overtones in the totem idea apart from its ethnological inspirations. Among the views described can be found the contributions of such great pioneers as J. G. Frazer, H. Risley, R. V. Russell, Graebner, Przyluski, S. C. Roy, L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, J. H. Hutton, J. Hoffmann, D. N. Majumdar, and others. The conclusions that appear as the last chapter of the book set out in broad relief the major findings of the learned author. These are good as summaries of facts, but the author would have done better to integrate the miscellany of facts into some kind of comprehensive interpretation.

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* *Totemism in India*. By JOHN V. FERREIRA. (Oxford University Press, Indian Branch, Bombay. 304 pp. 1965. Rs. 17.50)

The book is a significant contribution to one of the most intricate branches of anthropological studies in India in recent times. It is both an extensive and an intensive study. It takes a comprehensive view of the entire field. At the same time it shows painstaking and elaborate research in appropriate areas of detailed studies. It has wealth of material, though this is not perhaps matched with equal boldness of views.

The Bibliography is an indication of the great labour that has gone to produce this useful treatise.

A purely anthropological study of totemism has its limitations. Totemism has both universal and special features. The universal elements in totemism bear the message of a deeper meaning than sociologists and anthropologists acknowledge. The special features of totemism may be caused by many ethnological, climatic, environmental, historic, geographical, cultural, economic and sociological complexes of the places where the special features occur. The wood very often cannot be seen for the trees in totemism, where excellent detailed studies fail to emphasize the universal context. The totem is not merely an anthropological concept. The totem persists in different garbs and often in a concealed form. It is wrong to suppose that the totem thrives only in primitive societies. The time has come to investigate how modern civilization and advanced scientific and technological societies have their concealed totems. This nuclear age also has its totemism. Forms, symbols, rituals, and ceremonies may have changed, but totem, its essential doctrine, philosophy, and hold on the human mind, persist. It would be essential research to enquire into the reasons for this persistence and relate them to a synthesis of an anthropological retrospect of totemism, a view of its present survival in this age of reason and science, and a prospect of its future. That approach may lead to a more original and central discovery of totemism as a whole and may help to cover magic, custom, biology, sociology, religion, philosophy, and science in one grand integrity.

P. B. MUKHARJI

Democracy and Society. By A. R. WADIA. (Lalvani Publishing House, Bombay. 129 pp. 1966. Rs. 13.50)

Professor A. R. Wadia was at one time Professor of Philosophy in the University of Mysore. As Director of Public Instruction he proved an able administrator; and his subsequent career as Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Baroda and as a Member of Parliament has given him a deep insight into the problems of democracy and society, which he discusses with great lucidity and erudition. The book consists of two series of lectures delivered by him in 1965, at the Annamalai University and the Visva Bharati University, on "Democracy" and on "Society and State," respectively.

In the first section Professor Wadia discusses the different forms of democratic government in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, India, and finally Russia as representing communist democracy. He attributes the basic weakness of Indian democracy to the absence of the two-party system and the existence of innumerable parties with different ideologies which can never get together to form an effective opposition. He considers it a tragic mistake on the part of our constitution-makers to have begun with universal adult suffrage when seventy-five per cent of the voters are illiterate and even the literate twenty-five per cent can hardly be regarded as educated. A vast electorate spread over a wide area makes elections extremely costly and makes it impossible for men of character and ability to win against demagogues with money and caste support behind them. Nevertheless he thinks that the structure of democracy

in India has stood the stresses and strains of the last eighteen years, and he attributes this to the towering personality of the late Pandit Nehru.

In the second part of the book Professor Wadia discusses the type of society which could evolve as a result of democratic government, whether in the Western or the Russian sense. In his assessment of the respective achievements of the Western type of democracy prevalent in the United States of America and the United Kingdom and the communist democracy in Russia, Professor Wadia exhibits a rare sense of fairness and pays tribute to the spectacular achievements of the Soviet Union. He concludes that, while Communist democracy ensures security to the citizen, the democracies of the West stand for human dignity and freedom. In the last resort the choice boils down to freedom versus security.

Altogether, this is a book which deserves the widest possible circulation in our country. Professor Wadia has said many things about the working of democracy in India which needed saying badly. And he has said them with such fairness, and grace, and involvement (if such a word may be used), that his words soothe and heal. That a gracious gentleman is speaking should be obvious from the dedication of this book to his "revered teachers," whom he names, from High School to Oxford!

B. V. NARAYANA REDDY

Religion in a Modern Society. By H. J. BLACKHAM. (Constable, London. viii+229 pp. 1966. 21*s*.)

Mr. Blackham, a leader of the humanist movement in Britain, came into general prominence as editor of the famous collection of essays *Objections to Humanism* in which he and his colleagues, in common with their opposite numbers of the *Objections to Christian Belief* team, leaned over backwards in order to be both duly self-critical and fair to the opposition. The same qualities of integrity and objectivity, even detachment, mark the treatment of the serious theme, briefly adumbrated earlier, and here fully developed.

The author begins by pointing out that his is a freelance argument, without a respectable sociological pedigree, going back to Coleridge's work on Church-State relations and proceeding by way of T. S. Eliot's *The Idea of a Christian Society*. It is fundamentally a reappraisal of the traditional Church-State relationship, as known especially in Britain, in the light of current radical self-criticism in both Christian and humanist circles. But the terms of the argument are not narrowly drawn. Though the references and illustrations mainly concern that country, the issues have very much wider application, including for example India, to whose present ferment attention is drawn. Mr. Blackham believes, and effectively demonstrates, that the total situation is different from that in which Eliot, Maritain, and even Tillich, attempted to formulate the conditions of a modern Christian Society. He is able to conclude with a chapter on "The Co-existence of Absolutes" not susceptible to the famous Russian description of ideological co-existence as "fried snowballs."

He recognizes that all advanced religions are bound up with some absolute claim and call for an absolute commitment, and that any absolute excludes alternatives and will not tolerate a rival. Yet he believes that current existentialist attitudes are so eroding traditional patterns as to enable the creation of a common secular society in which all constructive thinkers will have freedom — a new open society in which co-existence and absolute are not mutually antithetical terms. He conceives of rival faiths finding ground for mutual respect in the acknowledgment by each of the relatively high importance of the other

and the refusal to acknowledge absolute status.

> Upon this overlapping common ground [he concludes] can be sited the concrete virtues specially characteristic of the rival faiths which all can value: the charity of Christians, the compassion of Buddhists, the candour of humanists, the progressiveness of Marxists: all forms of concern for man. Thus the co-existence of absolutes in so far as it involve-dialogue implies ambivalence, the co-existence of opposite responses to the same object.

Between the stating of the thesis and the attractive conclusion there is much wide-ranging argument based on personal and academic knowledge of extraordinary richness and perception, and, we must say again, a real concern to understand the point of view of others with whom he disagrees, even at their most absurd. In the end, however, the very comprehensiveness may defeat the object. Had Mr. Blackham argued his case with the passion inseparable from belief, he might have understood the reason why earlier attempts at comprehensive universalism have failed. In his concern with the outward manifestations, good and bad, of religions he seems to have given less than due concern to what "makes them tick." He will certainly carry with him many of the Christians of the "New Reformation," but one cannot but think that his point of contact with them is strongest just where they part company with their fellows.

This is, of course, a splendid and significant contribution to the continuing debate. It may well carry it forward a step. It is not likely to end it.

MARCUS WARD

The Teaching of Reverence for Life. By ALBERT SCHWEITZER. Translated from the German by RICHARD and CLARA WINSTON. (Peter Owen, London. 63 pp. 1966. 18*s*.)

"Reverence for Life," as a phrase has common currency, but its teaching needs furtherance if we are to counter what Dr. Schweitzer called "the ideology of inhumanity in our time." Here is the textbook, small in bulk like the *Gītā,* but boundless in its scope, tracing the evolution of this sense of reverence down the centuries. Concern for individual and social welfare have been stages, but now its crux in this nuclear age must be a total change in our view of "patriotism." Moreover, "an ethics that does not also consider our relation to the world of creatures is incomplete" — a challenge which should be red-lettered on the walls of scientific laboratories.

Yet even this, says the missionary doctor and Nobel-Prize-winning theologian, falls short; for merely to decapitate thoughtlessly some wayside flower is to "sin against life without being under the compulsion of necessity." Such reverence is not sentiment; it is "fraught with significance for the universe," since it enables man to enter into a spiritual relationship with that universe and to fulfil himself.

Two sentences which give the gist of this teaching surpass all barriers of race, religion, and nationality: (1) "The struggle against inhumanity must be waged wholly and continuously" and (2) "The essence of Goodness is: Preserve life, promote life, help life to achieve its highest destiny."

JOAN N. BURNETT

Thus Spake Basava. English Renderings of BASAVA'S *Vachanas* by A. SUNDERRAJ THEODORE and DEVENDRA KUMAR HAKARI. (Basava Samiti, Bangalore. 82 pp. 1965. Price not stated.)

This valuable little book is a transla-

tion into English of 108 choice *Vachanas* of the famous medieval Kannada religious reformer, Shri-Basava, who flourished eight centuries ago. A *Vachana* is a short poem of a few lines containing a moral teaching or a religious precept, expressed in popular language generally conveying a profound spiritual truth. The Kannada language is peculiarly suited to the utterance of pithy, intuitive flashes of mystic realization. A great deal of Shri-Basava's appeal to the generality of people is due to his mastery of this medium. He belongs to the line of great protestant religious teachers beginning with the Buddha and Mahavira and coming down through Kabir and Nanak, who rose in revolt against the ritualism of Vedic religion in their times and preached a direct, simple faith which emphasized the unity of mankind, the nobility of work in daily life, and the primacy of *bhakti* and condemned all privilege and vested interests, caste exclusiveness, and notions of superiority.

A perusal of these readable and elegant renderings will give an insight into the essential message of Shri-Basava, which has a peculiar aptness and applicability to the modern age. The Preface contributed by Shri A. S. Theodore is a valuable comparative study of Shri-Basava as a mystic and religious reformer. This publication, intended as a precursor to the eighth centenary celebration of Shri-Basava's advent, ably fulfils the purpose.

D. GURUMURTI

The Encyclopaedia of Myths and Legends of All Nations. By H. S. ROBINSON and K. WILSON. Edited by BARBARA LEONIE PICARD. (Edmund Ward, London. xi+244 pp. Second impression, 1965. 25*s*.)

Educationists have noted a somewhat unexpected interest in comparative religion among young people at technical colleges, and, though the Departments of Liberal Studies there may have something to do with it, it seems also a spontaneous response. And, judging by books now being published, there is something of a similar interest in myths, legends, and folk and fairy lore. Children's collections of fairy-tales and legends from different countries are always with us; but it is significant that it has been considered worth while to reprint the scholarly "Folktales of the World" series, under the editorship of Richard M. Dorson, as also the more popularly based *Encyclopaedia of Myths and Legends of all Nations* being reviewed. First published in the U.S.A. by Doubleday and Company in 1950, the present revised edition appeared in Great Britain in 1962, but found such favour that a second impression has been called for.

It is an excellent and handy volume, remarkably comprehensive in so small a compass, and treading a happy mean between learning and simplification. Its twenty-three sections cover the myths and legends of the different countries, including even the lesser known. It includes also stories of legendary figures like El Cid, Lady Godiva, and Robin Hood; fairy lore about leprechauns, trolls, and the like; and "tall tales" of American folklore heroes. A "topics" index helps to show the similarity of themes, while a General Index incorporates an invaluable Key to Pronunciation.

One may not perhaps agree with Miss Picard in her acceptance of the idea that myths are simply the fresh, unspoiled fancies of humanity in its childhood. There may be more to them than that, and it is interesting that she does not find entirely satisfactory any of the theories offered for the many similarities of "themes, characters, incidents and even details." Naturally the "feel" and poetry of the originals is lost in condensation, but something of the essential vitality comes

through. Both for reference, and as a treasure-house to be dipped into, this book will be highly regarded by anyone responsive to the appeal of myths and legends.

E. WHITE

The English Paracelsians. By ALLEN G. DEBUS. (Oldbourne History of Science Library. Oldbourne, London. 222 pp. Illustrated. 1965. 45*s*.)

Paracelsus, that strange Swiss contemporary of Copernicus, is an insufficiently studied figure in the history of science. Perhaps this is because he is so very difficult to understand. He was a man of intemperate character, and a master of abuse, who made many enemies: yet his ability as a practising physician — far more successful than most in his time — was scarcely denied by his severest critics. His medical work led him to a serious interest in chemistry, from which he rightly expected new and better remedies. He despised the medieval reliance on authority; and, in particular, he violently repudiated Galen. He was a powerful advocate of empiricism in the search for natural knowledge, at a time when such advocates were still rare. In all this, he may seem to us to be an early prophet of the rational scientific outlook that was gradually emerging; yet, at the same time, he was deeply involved with the astrological, alchemical, and Neoplatonic mysticisms of a previous culture.

This book deals with the influence of Paracelsus on English medico-chemical thought in Elizabethan and early Stuart times. The more occult parts of Paracelsian doctrine were concerned with the interrelation of microcosm and macrocosm — an idea derived from Plato. Man was regarded as a miniature universe in himself; so that the study of man and the general study of Nature became interlocking, mutually supporting disciplines. Along with this belief went a chemical theory based partly on the four traditional elements (earth, water, air, and fire) and partly on the three principles of *tria prima* (salt, sulphur, and mercury so called).

The English physicians of the time were, on the whole, typically pragmatic in their attitude. They avoided the ideological quarrels, which raged on the Continent, between Paracelsians and Galenists; they showed little interest in the mystical ideas, or in the chemical theory — soon to be destroyed by the arguments of Boyle's *Sceptical Chymist*. But they were quick — even within the conservative Royal College of Physicians — to try the new chemical remedies, which they used alongside the more traditional herbal medicines.

This is an interesting and scholarly book, clearly and unpretentiously written, with careful documentation and an exhaustive Bibliography. It deserves a place in the library of anyone who is concerned with the growth of scientific ideas.

LEWIS HULL

The Elephant and the Lotus: Essays in Philosophy and Culture. By V. S. NARAVANE. (Asia Publishing House, Bombay. 261 pp. 1965. Rs. 42.00)

The Elephant and the Lotus has been brilliantly written and superbly produced. Dr. Naravane's range is immense, extending from the Vedas to Stefan Zweig in these twenty essays. These essays, besides, are invested with a charm born of scholarly detachment and a delicate, cultured sensibility.

In his first essay Professor Naravane examines the reasons for the deification of trees and traces the peculiarity of the cult of tree-worship in India — it springs from a sense of the essential unity between the life of nature and the life of man. In the last essay, "In Praise of Indian Flowers," the theme is that

in India every flower is tinged with sanctity. In support of his contention, Professor Naravane refers to Buddhist and Jain literatures. He brings out the endless wonderfulness of Indian flowers with his gift of observation and his remarkable powers of description. The essay is a grand finale to his diapason.

There are three essays on Tagore. "The Eternal Traveller" contains a series of vignettes from his life, perhaps nothing new for an Indian reader. But in the other two essays, "Ethics of Rabindranath Tagore" and "The Place of Aesthetics in Tagore's Thought," Professor Naravane shows deep perception and a keen critical flair. Tagore's creed is that spirit is struggle and life is a deed, and Professor Naravane shows with admirable clarity how Tagore advocates a creative middle path between activism and asceticism, between God-intoxication and work-intoxication, between the outer and the inner. In the second essay he analyses subtly Tagore's world outlook and finds there a sense of freedom, tolerance, suggestiveness, and resilience and the possibilities of a rich, fruitful development. Firmly taking his stand on the immediacy and dynamism of aesthetic experience, Tagore leads us through ever-widening spheres of comprehension to a vision of the world in which harmony prevails over discord and divergence.

Kashmir has inspired three essays — one of them, the longest in the book. In this, "Aesthetics in Kashmir," Professor Naravane shows unmistakably that aesthetics is his *métier*. The aesthetic writings of Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta exert a magic spell over him. He concludes that there is no conflict between the theories of *rasa* and *dhvani*, as is sometimes imagined. Far from ignoring *rasa*, Ānandavardhana recognized it as the highest element in poetry. Abhinavagupta regards the *Śānta Rasa* — the mood of serenity and peace — as the ultimate end of art. It is peculiarly appropriate that a Kashmiri writer should have come forward as the champion of the *Śānta Rasa*: that Abhinavagupta, who had spent the happiest hours of his life in the solitude of nature, should have insisted that the highest forms of beauty, whether natural or man-made, must be conducive to peace.

Undoubtedly the main interest of the book is in the title essay, "The Elephant and the Lotus," where Professor Naravane discusses with profound knowledge the affection and the solicitude that the elephant has always received in India and later on discusses the elephant and the lotus motifs in Indian art and literatures.

Professor Naravane is gifted with a flowing style and a lively sense of pace. There is clarity, vigour, and sparkle in his impeccable English. Truly has Professor A. L. Basham remarked in his foreword: "His English style possesses such charm and lucidity that he deserves a place beside most of the best modern essayists in the English language."

The charm of the book has been heightened by the beautiful photographic studies by the author. Dr. Naravane's eye notices everything, his pen mentions everything, that is interesting; while his camera transforms objects which one is apt to miss into something hauntingly beautiful.

Messrs. Asia Publishing House and the Times of India Press deserve the thanks of all book-lovers for having produced this volume with such loving care. It is an outstanding specimen of book production in India.

To discriminating readers all over the world the book will undoubtedly provide intellectual stimulation and present a very heart-warming picture of the writer's personality. The words of Abhinavagupta, for whom he has a very high regard, may be applied to Professor Naravane with justice:

> A man of taste is he who, through wide experience of the world and continuous

acquaintance with the works of great artists, has become sensitive to situations described in poetry or painting and is ready to identify himself with them.

DILIP KUMAR SEN

The Classical Drama of the Orient. By HENRY W. WELLS. (Asia Publishing House, Bombay. 348 pp. 1965. Rs. 30.00)

Mr. Wells is widely and deeply read in the dramatic literature of many countries, and he has cultivated particular interest in the theatre of the Orient. In an earlier volume, *The Classical Drama of India,* he wrote on our Sanskrit heritage with enthusiasm and understanding; the present work is on the dramatic literature of China and Japan. Although Mr. Wells employs divers criteria — in terms of *genres,* ethics, mythology, lyricism, and symbolism — his writing is not burdened by the current critical jargon, and so his book easily holds the reader's attention.

The Chinese classical theatre has long been a closed book for us. In spite of pioneering translations by John Francis Davis and S. W. Williams, it is only in the 1930's and after that plays like *The Chalk Circle, Intrigues of a Maid Servant* (*Lady Precious Stream,* in S. I. Hsiung's exquisite version), *Madame Cassia, The Right to Kill,* and *The West Chamber* began to make an impact on the West, and influenced writers like Bertolt Brecht and Samuel Beckett. Mr. Wells considers particular examples of the different *genres* (comedy, tragedy, and tragi-comedy), and with suggestive comparisons helps to place the works in the right world perspective. In the important chapter on the tragedies, he discusses *Snow in Midsummer,* in which women's sufferings, bureaucratic unscrupulousness, ghosts, Death's finality, and moralistic undertones provide the ingredients of the tragic *genre.* The pattern is repeated in *The Sorrows of Han,* which is perhaps the best of the tragedies:

> It is naked tragedy, in some ways more powerful for having so few embellishments, ornament or digressions of any kind. The ballad-like forthrightness of the style gives it dignity.

Mr. Wells describes *The Chalk Circle* as a tragi-comedy, and comments at length on the comedy, *Madame Cassia* Informative chapters follow, on dramatic characters and on the ethical seriousness and mythological content of the Chinese drama.

With all its non-dramatic attachments, the Chinese classical drama is drama all the same, and leaps to life in the study and the theatre alike. As for the Noh of Japan, "it closely resembles nothing in Asia," and "the general complex of the Noh stands forth in pronounced independence." The Noh playwright depends a good deal on a dramatic presentation in the theatre, but the poetic content is important too. Noh plays like *Tosoku, Miidera, Sotoba Komachi,* and *Izutsu* recreate the opulence of Nature itself. The written play is more lyrical than dramatic, though a dramatic conflict is always present:

> The chief theme running through the Noh plays is the opposition between the worldly and otherworldly existence; on the one hand are the feudal virtues and the sophisticated sensuality of a courtly life, on the other, a devout belief in Buddhistic mysticism. A nervous incertitude underlies the scene.

If the Noh lacks the "dramatic" element as we understand the term, it is richly endowed in the poetic element, which Mr. Wells studies in four chapters: "The Lyric Capsule," "Conventions of Speech," "Vespers of the Moon," and "Poetry and Magic." And he sees the future of the Noh in the musical theatre; for it alone can fuse to incandescent purpose the three elements of music, dance, and visual presentation.

PREMA NANDAKUMAR

Shakespeare's Historical Plays. By S. C. SEN GUPTA. (Oxford University Press, London. 172 pp. 1964. Rs. 20.00)

Professor Sen Gupta's main thesis is that Shakespeare's historical plays are primarily works of art and that they are best interpreted as plays only. His remarks in this respect in the first two chapters are particularly illuminating:

> Shakespeare's vision is aesthetic rather than ethical . . . we should never lose sight of the aesthetic significance of his work or give too much prominence to the moral interpretation emphasized in his sources.

He compares and contrasts Shakespeare's plays with his sources and shows how with a touch or two Shakespeare could completely transform the wooden figures he had lifted from history.

The author establishes that Shakespeare had no political purpose to serve in his historical plays. His chief aim was to reveal the richness and complexity of human nature, which on certain occasions could win over even Fortune, so prevailing a power in his plays. Shakespeare's Histories are connected with a common link — that of the continuity in the flow of life.

In the last four chapters of the book two tetralogies of historical plays, and *King John* and *Henry VIII*, have been carefully examined and analysed. What are their sources? How did Shakespeare work "on the cumbrous materials supplied by history"? What values do the plays represent? What is their dramatic structure? All these quesions have been answered with precision of reasoning and lucidity of thought. Professor Sen Gupta draws upon other works of criticism and makes his arguments clear by illustrations from the texts of the plays as well as from their sources. This work is an example of industry, clear thinking, and deep knowledge.

SURENDRANATH AGNIHOTRI

Caribbean Literature: An Anthology. Selected and edited by G. R. COULTHARD. (University of London Press Ltd., London. 127 pp. 1966. 12*s*. 6*d*.)

Although the editor of this anthology, drawn from the work of writers who happen to have been born in the Caribbean, wisely leaves it to the reader to decide whether or not there exists a "common Caribbean sensibility," one can hardly avoid the conclusion that his selection has been made, consciously or unconsciously, to demonstrate a common attitude or identity. It would have been no less difficult, with such a rich variety available, to assemble another collection of work from Caribbean-born writers without giving an entirely different impression. The omission of such writers as Louis Simpson, V. S. Naipaul, A. L. Hendriks, John Figueroa, Edward Lucie-Smith, O. R. Dathorne, and Alejo Carpentier, to mention only a few, is more significant in this respect than it might appear at first glance. This, of course, is not a criticism — merely a warning to the reader to be on his guard against making the kind of superficial judgement the anthology seems to invite.

To be fair, Mr. Coulthard presents a selection of prose and poetry from "what is most typical" in the work of writers from Jamaica, Trinidad, Tobago, St. Lucia, Barbados, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Haiti, and as such it is an extremely interesting volume. Derek Walcott and Mervyn Morris stand out among the poets, while George Lamming and Samuel Selvon add unmistakable quality to the prose. The editor himself provides translations from the French of Aimé Césaire and the Spanish of Enrique Serpa Nicolás Guillén, René Marqués, and Luis Palés Matos.

HOWARD SERGEANT

Bhojacarita. By RAJAVALLABHA. Edited with English Introduction, Notes, and Appendices by B. CH. CHHABRA and S. SANKARANARAYANAN. (Bharatiya Jnanapitha, Varanasi. XXIII+191 pp. 1964. Rs. 8.00).

The Paramāra King Bhoja (*c.* 999-1054) of Dhārā is one of those historical personages who soon became legendary heroes of Indian bards and chroniclers. As a poet and a patron of letters, as a versatile writer and a benevolent monarch, Bhoja's fame was sung by so many panegyrists that, even centuries after his death, Bhoja's life and work could attract the imagination of popular writers in Sanskrit. The work under review is by Rājavallabha, a Jaina author of the fifteenth century, who is out to portray his hero as the *beau ideal* of *annadāna* or food-giving. Into this didactic framework is fitted many a popular myth about the life of Bhoja, derived from earlier chronicles like that of Merutunga.

In the medley of fact and fiction presented by such *prabandhas,* the task of reconstructing sound history is well-nigh baffling; and historians more often than not leave the *prabandhas* out of account. But the learned editors of this work have shown how a patient study may prove rewarding in piecing together some missing links in Indian history. That Bhoja's rule was for a period of fifty-five years, seven months, and three days is corroborated by many a *prabandha* and the editors have shown how it is historically plausible in the light of recent historical and epigraphical researches. The account of the Paramāra Muñja's tragic expedition against the Southern Chalukya king, Taila II, is also corroborated by literary and epigraphic evidence.

The work consists of five books called *Prastāvas.* The first describes the chequered course of Bhoja's childhood, exposed as he was to the whims of the cruel uncle, King Muñja; his accession to the throne; and some instances of his munificence to men of letters like the Jaina poet Dhanapāla. The other books record mythical accounts of Bhoja's intelligence, the merit of his *annadāna* in a previous birth, stories of his yogic feats, and romantic adventures reminding one of the legendary Vikramāditya.

From the literary point of view, the work is very disappointing. The verses, mostly in the *Anuṣṭubh* metre, are prosaic and lack poetic grace and finish. As noted by the learned editors:

> There are numerous errors in grammar and in syntax. In some places Rajavallabha is very vague in his expression and description; in some other places he does not hesitate to drop letters of some words or to add synonyms for the sake of metre. . . .

Readers will be thankful to the editors for adding Notes that explain the odd and uncommon vocabulary of the author, which includes even colloquial *Apabhraṁśa* forms like "*Rori*" (= *daridra*)

The Bharatiya Jnanapitha deserves our praise for undertaking the first edition of this work and for entrusting it to such competent hands.

K. KRISHNAMOORTHY

Ends and Sayings

> " . . . ends of verse
> And sayings of philosophers."
>
> —SAMUEL BUTLER: *Hudibras*

The word "Culture" has become somewhat bogus, though there is no other to take its place. Perhaps with the widespread activities now going on, it may

regain something of its original etymological significance of growth and vitality. A quick glance round the world will show a more favourable climate than earlier periods afforded, the value of its diversity, and the necessity of integrating what is rooted in one tradition with the fertilizing influences from outside. The first alone leads to a narrow, divisive outlook, but the negation of one's own heritage means extinction in uniformity.

The first World Festival of Negro Art was held in April 1966, at Dakar, Senegal (West Africa), whose President, Leopold Senghor, is one of the most prominent protagonists for "nègritude" (a proclaiming of the virtues and special qualities of the Negro races). Some 31,000 visitors, and delegates from 39 countries, attended this lively and exciting affair. The London weekly *West Africa* (23 April 1966), in reporting it, brought out the point that there is no African art common even to any state. It is "creative differentiations" in the tribal art that count. Further, unity between art and belief is paramount. Kalabari sculpture, for example, is not made as "a work of art" but for ritual efficacy in bringing about a relationship with the spirits in nature. William Fagg, of the British Museum, London, winner of the first award for a book on Art in Africa, considers that the idea of "nègritude," or "the African personality" only "obscures and denies the rich originality of the indigenous African culture in the interest of a spurious ideological conformity." Tribalism can well be a hindrance, but the treasures of tribality should be kept.

Further north, the United Arab Republic (present-day Egypt), has been urged by André Malraux, France's Minister of Culture, on an unusual diplomatic mission, to "find its soul" by realizing how vast and marvellous a heritage it has from ancient Egypt. Without that, its present agricultural and industrial advance has no stability. (*The Observer,* 3 April 1966).

In the United States President Johnson has been able to push through a grant of $7,000,000 to the new American Foundation on the Arts — a project that even Kennedy failed with. According to Anthony Howard (*The Observer,* 10 April 1966), though this is only about one-twentieth of the amount available in Britain for State patronage of culture, the principle of the arts as having collective value to the nation has been established. Among Australians in Britain, working in the arts, there is a movement to "civilize" Australia by breaking through its "insularity and conformity" as regards the arts. John Ardagh (*The Observer,* 10 April 1966) reports the founding of a new "link" magazine *Australarts,* so that Australians who have benefited by working outside their homeland may, in turn, help it to cultural vitality.

The purpose of the UNESCO conference at Tokyo at the end of May 1966 was to "assess the role of books in the economic and social development of Asia," its needs, and also ways and means of helping its book production and distribution, and the flow of books between Asian and other countries. Tokyo is an appropriate venue, since, according to Raymond Lamont Brown (*Books,* March-April 1966), Japan has a literacy rate of some 98 per cent of population, and also the highest *per capita* number of titles published *per annum* in the world. The Japanese are avid and intelligent readers. No book is "too intellectual or hard to sell." Book prices are kept low and publishers' problems are chiefly those of excessive demand. One hopes that UNESCO will have considered not only "the economic and social development" at its conference, but also what Malraux and others have proclaimed — the relationship between the arts and the soul of man. The first is rooted in, and should be an expression of, the second.

Thanks to the efforts of Lord Stonham, Under-Secretary for Home Affairs,

now in charge of prison administration in Britain, another phase of the more humane attitude to prisoners is under way in the reorganizing of industrial work in prisons so that the production and general atmosphere will be much more that of an ordinary factory than hitherto. There is a twofold purpose — to make it easier for prisoners, on being discharged, to accommodate themselves to normal life, by providing surroundings and incentives more akin to it, and by giving training which will help the transition from prison to industry. Lord Stonham, President of Prison Reform Council, hopes that "men who have not worked before, or who have not worked very well, will get into the habit of useful work and take a pride in it." (*The Times,* 30 April 1966). Nothing has been published, so far, about rates of payment. Trade unions are apparently raising no objections to such competition, but it seems certain that reducing the number of prison industries from thirty-six to nine, and organizing them in a more concentrated way in the different prisons, will make for greater efficiency.

A pilot survey on probation was also published by the Home Office Research Unit on 13 April 1966, and, according to Frank Dawtry, General Secretary, National Association of Probation Officers (*The Guardian,* 19 April 1966), showed that, "measured by the completion of a period of probation without reconviction or a breach of conditions, 76.7 per cent of the probationers succeeded." The after-care of prisoners has also been transferred recently to the Probation Service. These are indications, as are the increases in work by voluntary after-care organizations like Norman House, the Blackfriars Settlement, and others, of the growth of public conscience, and some breaking down of the pharisaical notion of "offenders" and "us."

The *Observer Magazine* Wild Life Exhibition, promoted by the Council of Nature, was held at the Alexandra Palace, London, from 21 April to 1 May 1966. At the same time, the weekly *Observer* colour supplement featured man's relations with the kingdoms of nature. The first instalment showed man as "destroyer" — the horrifying extent to which he has callously and cruelly massacred whole species of birds and beasts for gain or for sport. The second and third instalments dealt with the recognition in recent decades that this slaughter had to stop, and finally with what is being done for the future.

The well-known writer Elspeth Huxley, who surveyed with no favourable eye the modern methods of food production in her last book *Brave New Victuals,* accuses the nation, in her article "Saving the Countryside" (*The Observer,* 17 April 1966) of merely giving lip service to the ideal of "unspoilt" country, as a place for leisure, for the therapy of open-air activities, and as a contact with "nature" to satisfy spiritual hunger. Is it, she asks, really prepared to pay the right price in changing radically not only its way of life, but its whole image of man? We spoil our cities, wasting space there, and then sprawl into the countryside to spoil that too. What are we really prepared to spend money on — faster aircraft? unlimited "free" drugs? exploration of space? building of nuclear weapons, etc., etc.? Yet, for a fraction of the cost of these, the countryside could be saved, and the lot of people everywhere could be immensely bettered.

It seems to be the same old problem that the Buddha met with — mistaking what has abiding value for the unreal, and taking the unreal for the real. Yet perhaps some are awakening to the fact that man cannot have any real and satisfying existence in separation from the rest of nature.